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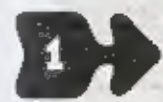
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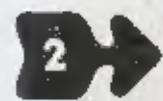


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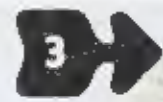
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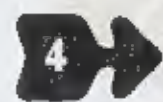


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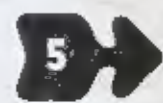


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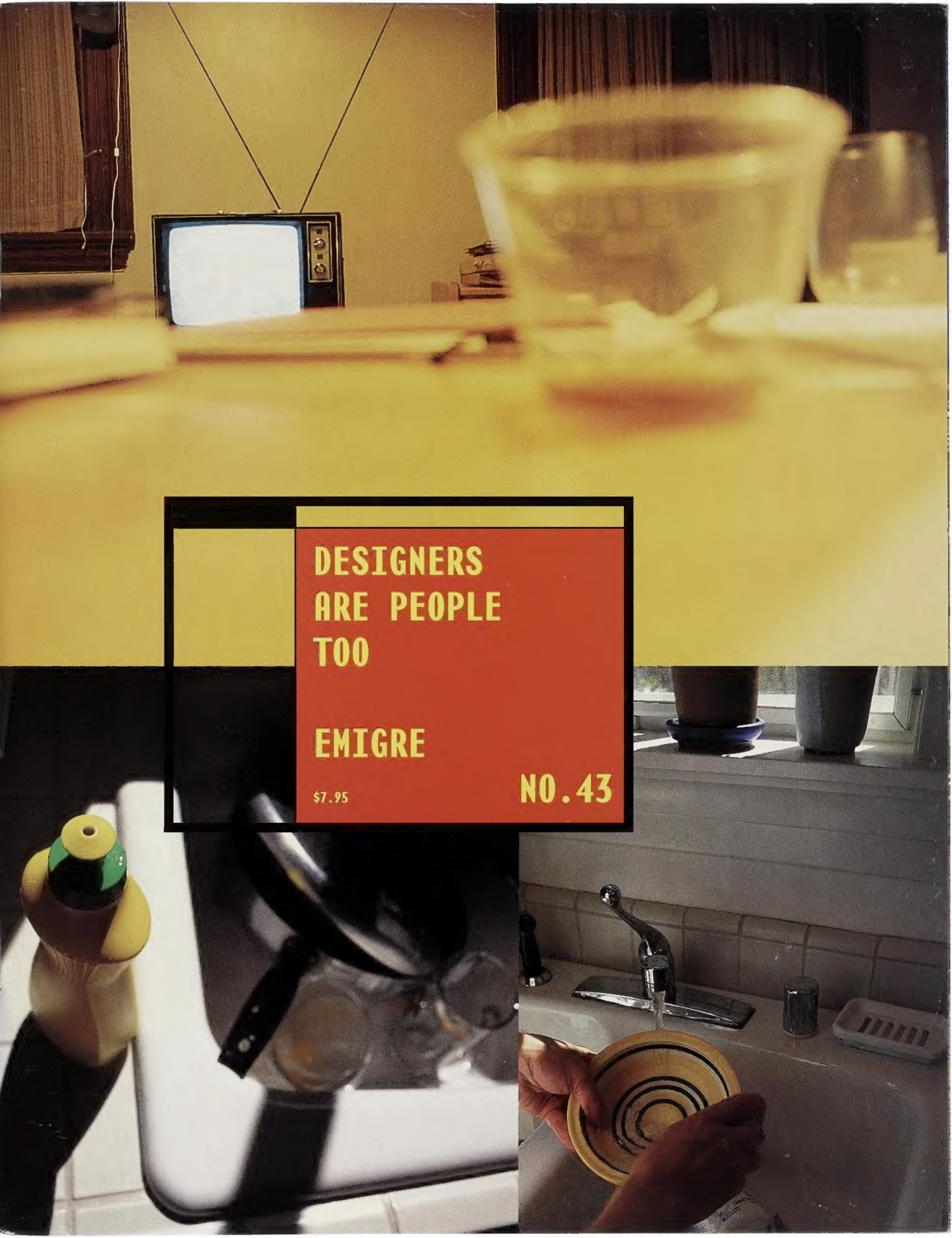
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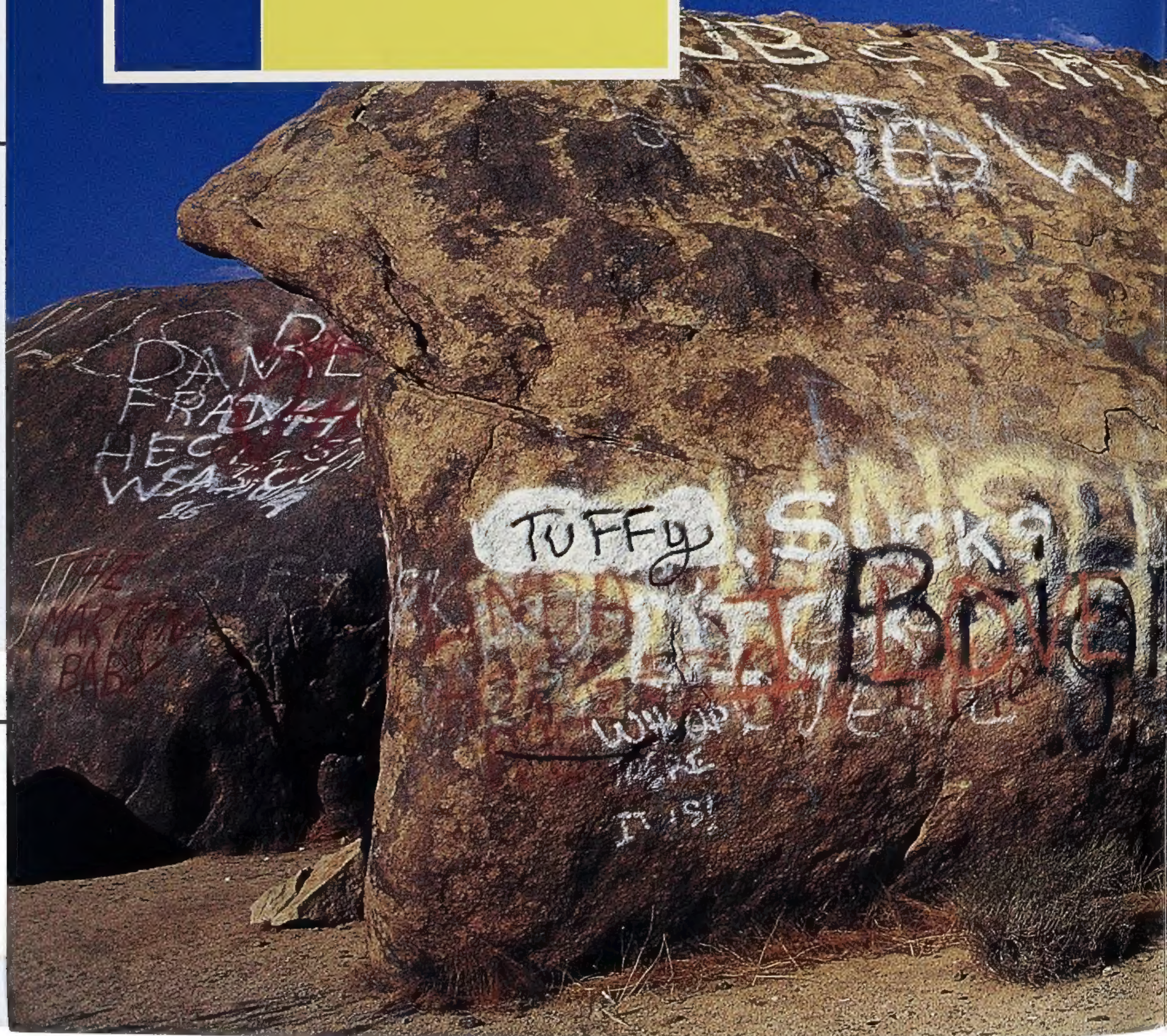
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TOO**

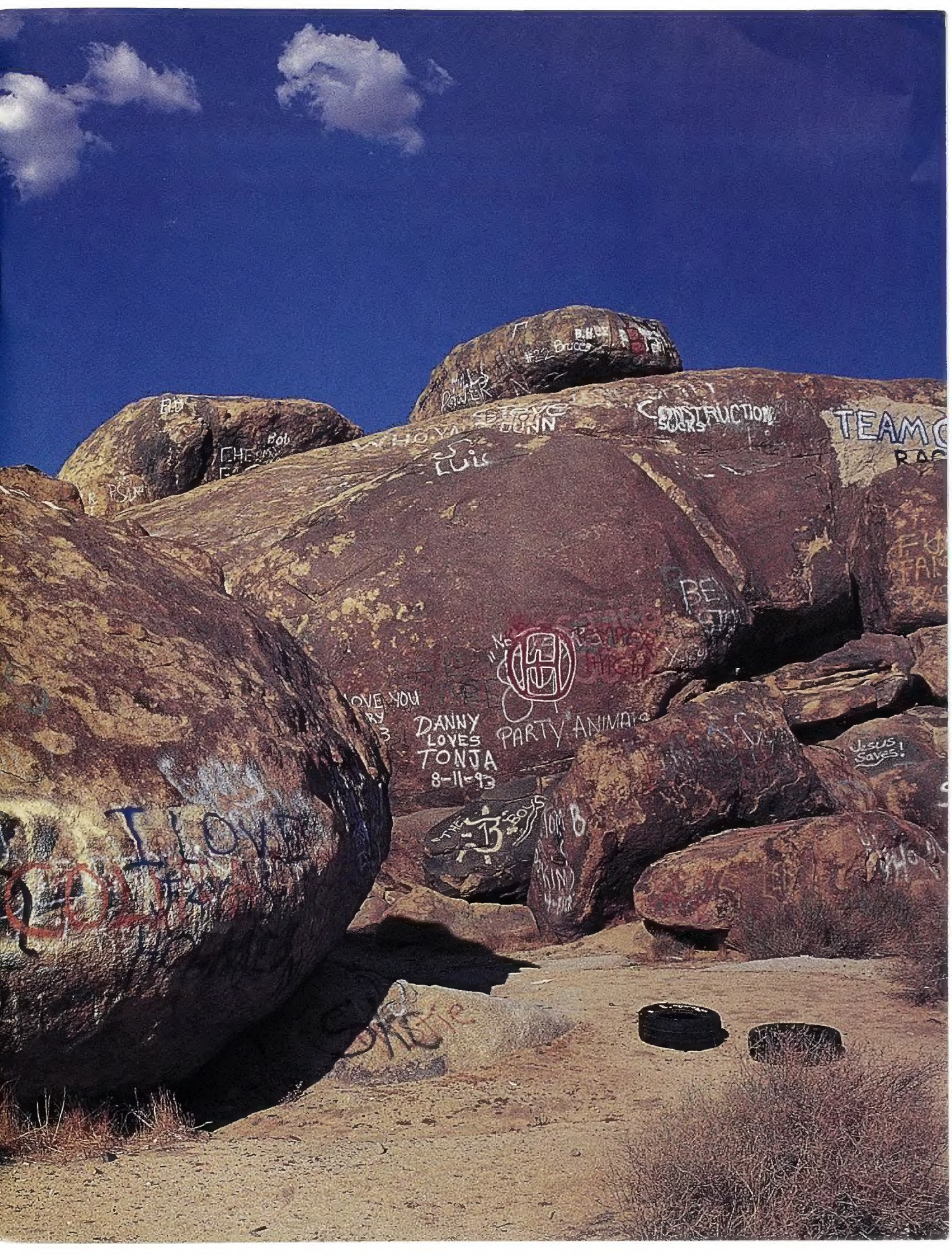
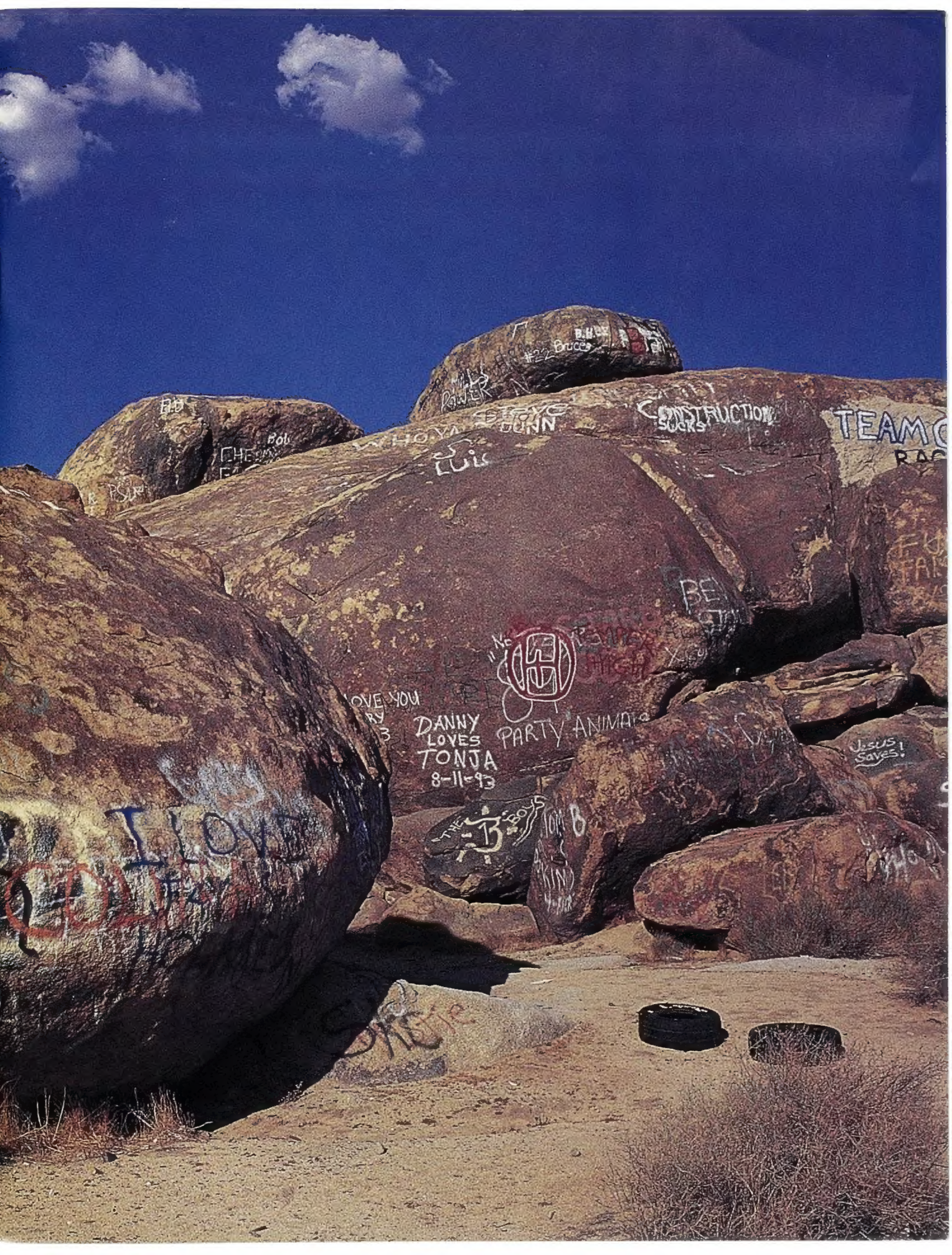
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NO. 43

**PEOPLE
ARE DESIGNERS
TOO**





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Introduction

It was no surprise to us, with the publication of *Emigre* no. 42, that a few of our readers would respond negatively to our decision to sell advertising and accuse us of "selling out." For those of you concerned that we're on our way to becoming the indentured servants of big industry, rest assured: multinational advertisers are not lining up to hand us \$22,000 checks with content restrictions printed on the back. And if they did offer us such money, we'd laugh in their faces, tear up the checks and say "Thanks, but no thanks."

Or would we? It's easy to say that we would never "sell out" our principles, particularly when no one has ever offered us such money. Ads for \$22,000 would allow us to do some amazing typeface development and assign some terrific writing — perhaps even publish work that would rub our advertisers the wrong way. But that would be wrong, wouldn't it? To take money from a company and then publish material we knew was against their very wishes. However, if we were to change our content to please our advertisers, wouldn't that be self-censorship and wouldn't that ultimately deprive the audience of uncompromised content? Difficult stuff.

I guess the trick is to avoid putting yourself in a position where the realization of your ideas becomes entirely financially reliant on outside sources. Particularly if these sources have quite differing, if not opposing, interests from your own. Once you do this, "selling out" happens, and everybody loses.

Jeffery Keedy addresses some of these issues, and then some, in *Greasing the Wheels of Capitalism with Style and Taste* or the 'Professionalization' of Graphic Design in America (page 40), while Denise Gonzales-Crisp, in her article "Out of Context: Entrepreneurs, Designists and Other Utopians" (page 50), looks at what designers (can) do to circumvent the traditional and often compromising client/designer relationship. Also, Teal Triggs and Siân Cook, of the London-based *Women's Design + Research Unit* (page 20), revisit the seemingly unchanged role of women as both subjects and objects in graphic design. Of course, there's the *Readers Response* section (page 34). And, lastly, yours truly takes a closer look at type as intellectual property in *The Trouble with Type* (page 8). Enjoy. R.V.D.L.

EMIGRE NO. 43. DESIGNERS ARE PEOPLE TOO. SUMMER 1997.

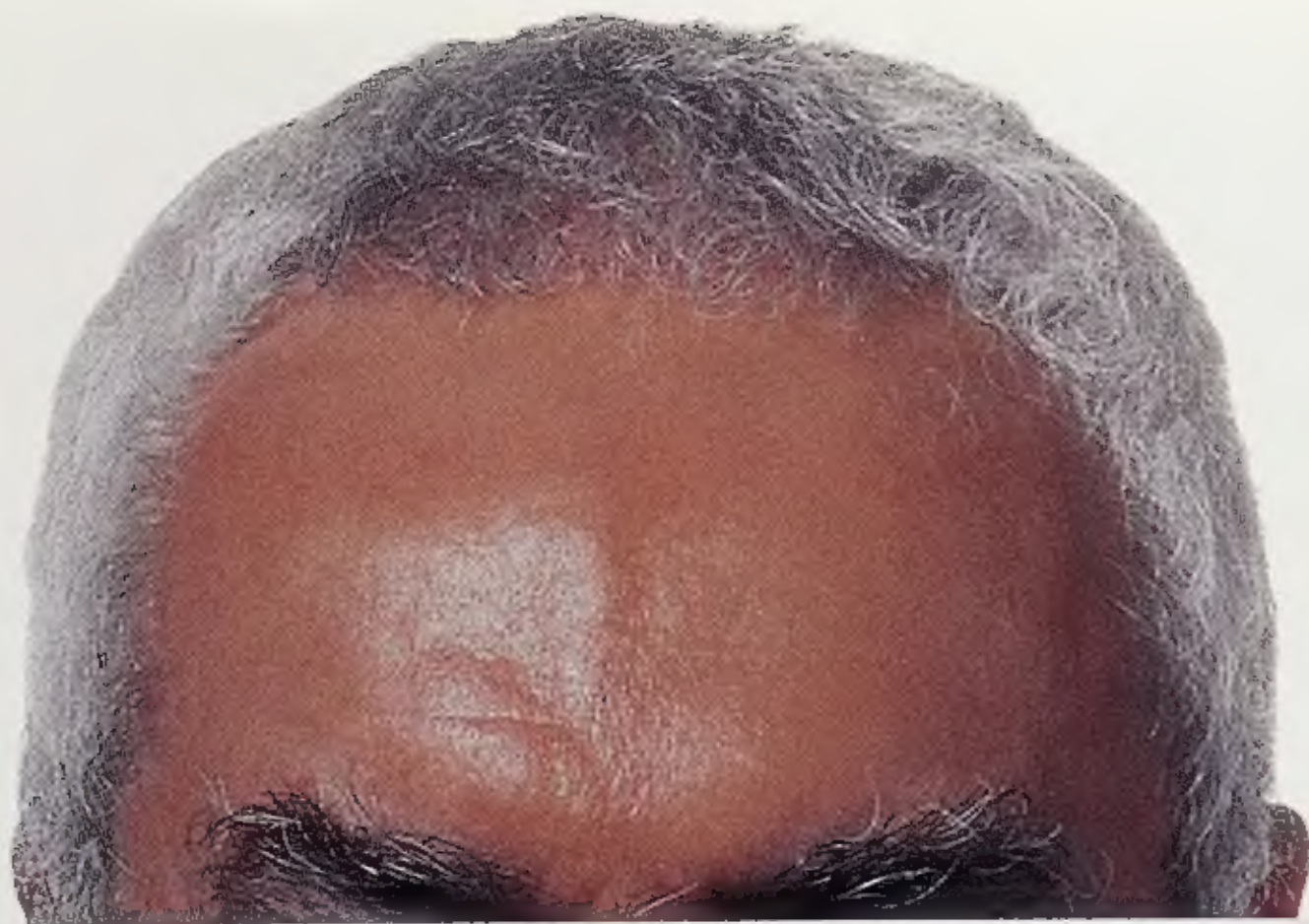
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The work is chaotic. So much of it is confusing.

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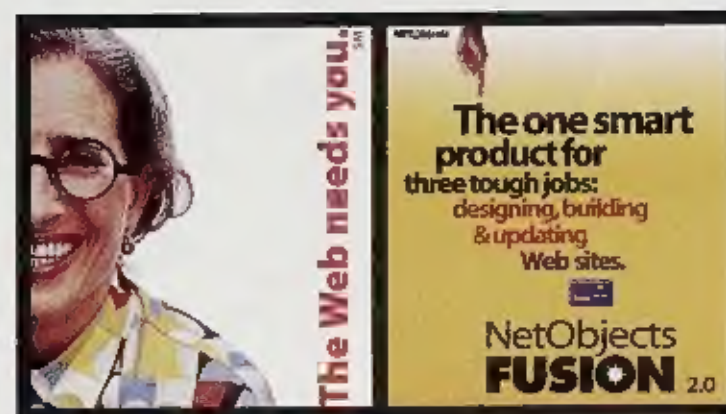
Is there any architecture for the information?

For me, great design has always required discipline. Dedication to order and clarity and purity. A thoughtful examination of the problem that needs solving. Where you show your brilliance and where you capture people's imagination is in how simply—yet ingeniously—you solve that problem.

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THE TROUBLE WITH TYPE

BY RUDY VANDERLANS

"In every typeface there is, irrespective of its purpose, a more or less independent esthetic value of form, which in turn also has its own direct expressivity." Karl Gerstner¹

In the article "Decay and Renewal in Typeface Markets," published in *Emigre* no.42, Alan Marshall addresses the age-old complaint of people in the type industry that piracy will ultimately kill the industry. Marshall counters by stating that "Type markets are conditioned by a complex set of economic factors whose force lies in their ability to evolve in the light of social and cultural changes."

Being a relative newcomer in this industry, I can't help but notice that this "evolution" is marked by an increasing lack of respect for the artistic product itself. With the passing of each of the giants of type manufacturing, a new company takes its place selling mostly derivative typefaces, spending fewer dollars on the development of original designs and more dollars on marketing and selling fonts. With a few exceptions, the bulk of the new or surviving foundries and distributors have only one goal: to sell as much type as cheaply as possible without concern for the quality, use, conservation or development of typefaces. Despite his own accounts on the demise of such influential companies as Monotype and ATF, Marshall, throughout the article, remains steadfast and writes "Total industrial chaos seems just about as unlikely as the threatened collapse of the quality typeface market." He points out, like others before him, that type is really only half the story and that how type is used is what really counts. One solution to type piracy and the preservation of quality type is through education. Educate users about type, and crummy rip-off versions will simply disappear.

While there is much merit in this solution, it is difficult to ignore that the type companies that *did* educate, such as ATF and Monotype, are the ones that have fallen by the wayside or are struggling to survive. Few type companies today invest in the education of type usage and the heritage of type design the way that Monotype or ATF did in the first half of the 20th century. Compare the Image Club catalog with, let's say, the ATF *Type Specimen* book, or Agfa's printed materials with the *Monotype Recorder*, and you'd have to be blind not to see the obvious difference in quality, both visually and in terms of content. Where are the Stanley Morisons, the Beatrice Wardes, the Jan van Krimpens, the Frederick Goudys and the Morris Fuller Bentons of today?

1. Karl Gerstner, *Compendium for Literates*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 1974.



The letter "A" designed by Brian Schorn, from *Breathing Through the Body of A*, a scenario for a future typography first published in *Emigre* no.32, 1994. On right page, Helvetica Bold "A" designed by Max Miedinger in 1957.

Perhaps this is simply a transitional period, and perhaps Marshall is right and ultimately the cream rises to the top. Currently, however, things look rather bleak. One reason why we see ever more companies selling cheap derivatives by the CD load and fewer companies genuinely involved in the design of new typefaces is that the United States, one of the largest typeface markets in the world, continues to deny copyright protection to typeface designs.* While there are other methods to protect typeface designs, none is as effective as copyright. Patent protection, for instance, is limited both in terms of time and territory, since it is granted for only 14 years and it is not universally accepted by other countries, as is copyright protection.

The idea behind a copyright is to provide protection to encourage the development of new and innovative work, ultimately for the benefit of society. Without this protection, there is less incentive for individuals or companies to create new work, as it can be copied by anyone the moment it is made public. While copyright protection does not automatically stamp out piracy or infringement, it does give artists the opportunity for legal recourse in the event their work is copied without permission. In the absence of proper protection methods and with copying extremely easy with today's digital technology, companies investing in quality type will continue to disappear, and with them the heritage of five centuries of typeface development. These losses will definitely not benefit anybody.

Typeface piracy has always existed, but it is obvious that with each new technology the act of copying has become easier and that copies have become increasingly indistinguishable from originals. Today it requires literally no expertise of any kind to make a perfect copy of a typeface. Without proper protection, typefaces have become easy targets for opportunists eager to bank on the public's desire for typefaces.

The United States is one of the few, if not only, industrialized nations in the world that does not extend copyright protection to typeface designs. The reason for this comes from the old copyright doctrine that typefaces, like most industrial designs, are considered to be utilitarian and that they exhibit insufficient original authorship. In general, such articles are not copyrightable, unless they contain artistic features capable of existing separately and independently of the overall utilitarian shape. Furthermore, the courts that have upheld the Copyright Office's decision regarding typefaces have also expressed other concerns. By granting copyright protection to typefaces, the court has argued, the freedom of the press might be impeded. But typeface designers do not seek to claim ownership of the alphabet; they seek protection for the various expressions of the alphabet. Designers recognize that as an idea, the alphabet should remain unprotectable, since it is part of the public domain. Typeface designs, on the other hand, are the expressions of that idea. And as expressions of an idea, they constitute original works of authorship.

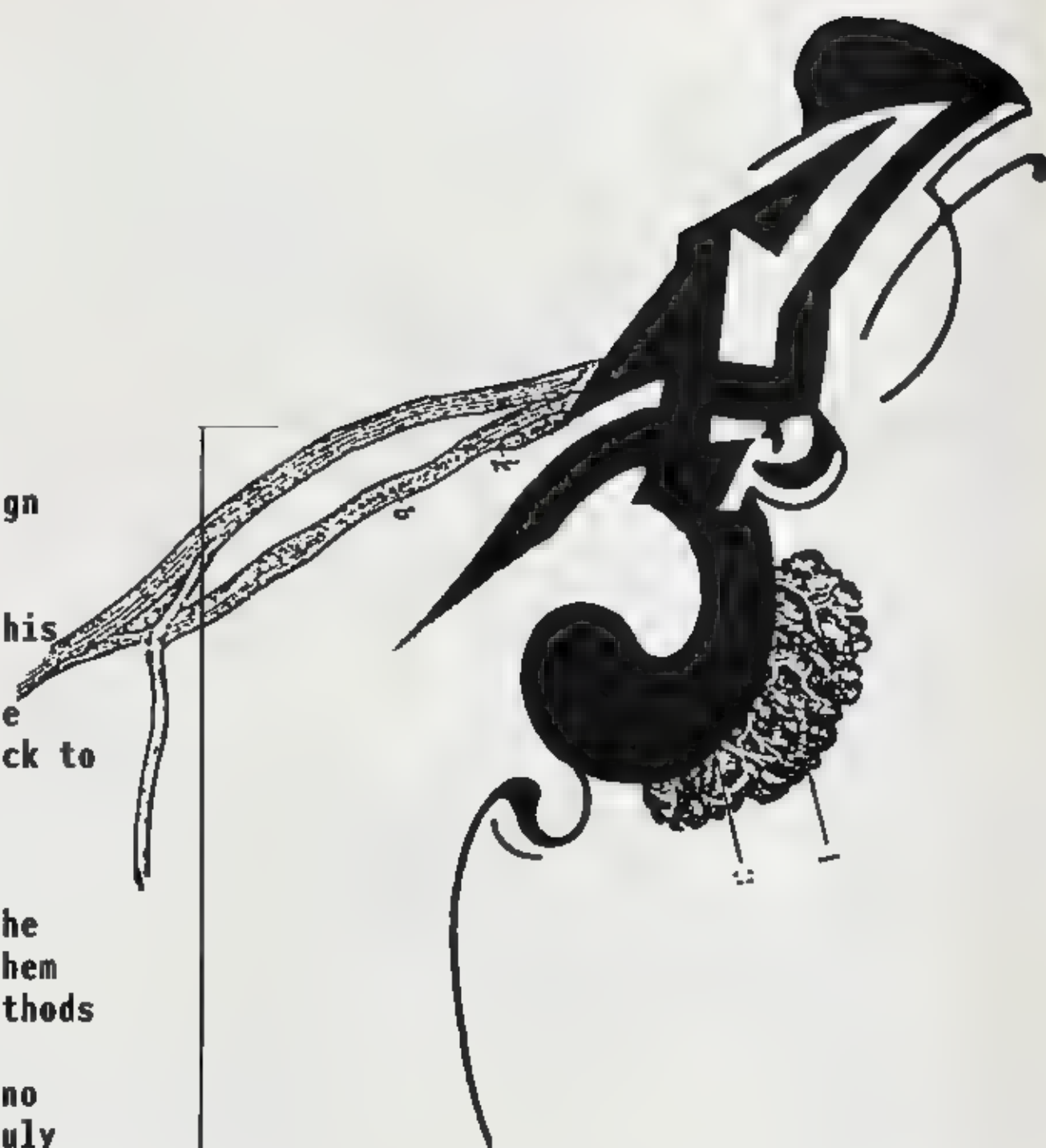
* Before you run off and start copying all your friends' typefaces, beware that certain parts and functions of the font software are copyrightable, and that certain typefaces also have design patents, trademarked names, licensing restrictions and other forms of protection.

A

The Copyright Office's decision to bar all typeface design from copyright protection intrigues me for two reasons. First, it goes to the very core of what a typeface is, a debate that has occupied many pages in *Emigre*. Second, this argument cuts to the very center of our livelihood: the design, manufacture and distribution of original typeface designs. The Copyright Office's decision, which dates back to 1978, is outdated. The typeface industry has changed significantly since this decision. The postmodern and deconstructivist theories that circulated throughout art schools in the 80s and 90s had a profound influence on the design of typefaces and typography, ultimately freeing them from the restraints of functionality. Coupled with new methods of creating type facilitated by the personal computer, a renaissance in typeface design has taken place that has no precedence in its 500 year history. This fact has been duly noted by curator Ellen Lupton who, in the recent show *Mixing Messages, Graphic Design and Contemporary Culture*, at the Smithsonian's Cooper-Hewitt Museum, gave singular attention to typeface design, and reflected upon font production as "a new form of underground publishing."⁽²⁾

In today's image-conscious information era, type is taking up an increasingly prominent role in giving shape to the world around us. As such, typeface design is now regularly discussed in the mainstream press, is shown in major museums, is the topic of countless anthologies, annuals, how-to and other design books. Typeface design was even the topic of a recent television program on MSNBC's *The Site*. Writer Neil Feinman, quoted in an article about typeface design in the *Los Angeles Times*, reflects upon this recent phenomenon. "Quirky type and page design," he says, "have come to be harnessed simply for their trendiness, not because they blend to create meaning."⁽³⁾ While trendiness is a description not all type designers like, Feinman's statement does underline how typefaces have moved from being simple carriers of linguistic meaning to expressions of entire trends. Or, as design critic Michael Rock puts it "...[typefaces] document and codify the 'current,' generating the artifacts that will serve to frame our own generation."⁽⁴⁾ It is this particular quality of secondary meaning and expressivity that has earned the new crop of fonts such high acclaim and exposure, and demonstrates that there is ample original authorship in typeface design.

2. Ellen Lupton, *Mixing Messages: Graphic Design in Contemporary Culture*. New York: Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum and Princeton Architectural Press, 1996.
3. Irene Lacher, THE DIFFICULT TYPE, *Los Angeles Times*, June 28, 1993.
4. Michael Rock, TYPEFACES ARE RICH WITH THE GESTURE AND SPIRIT OF THEIR OWN ERA. *I.D.*, May/June 1992.
5. Paul Elliman, READING TYPOGRAPHY WRITING LANGUAGE. *Fuse 10, Freeform*, Summer 1994.



Type as experiment. The postmodern and deconstructivist theories that circulated throughout art schools in the 80s and 90s had a profound influence on the design of typefaces and typography, ultimately freeing them from the restraints of functionality. Above, "A" from experimental typeface designed by Brian Schorn, 1993. Below, "n" and "o" from *OutWest on a Fifteen Degree Ellipse* designed by Edward Fella, 1993.



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Volume 1 no. 3

Type Is Meant To Be Read.
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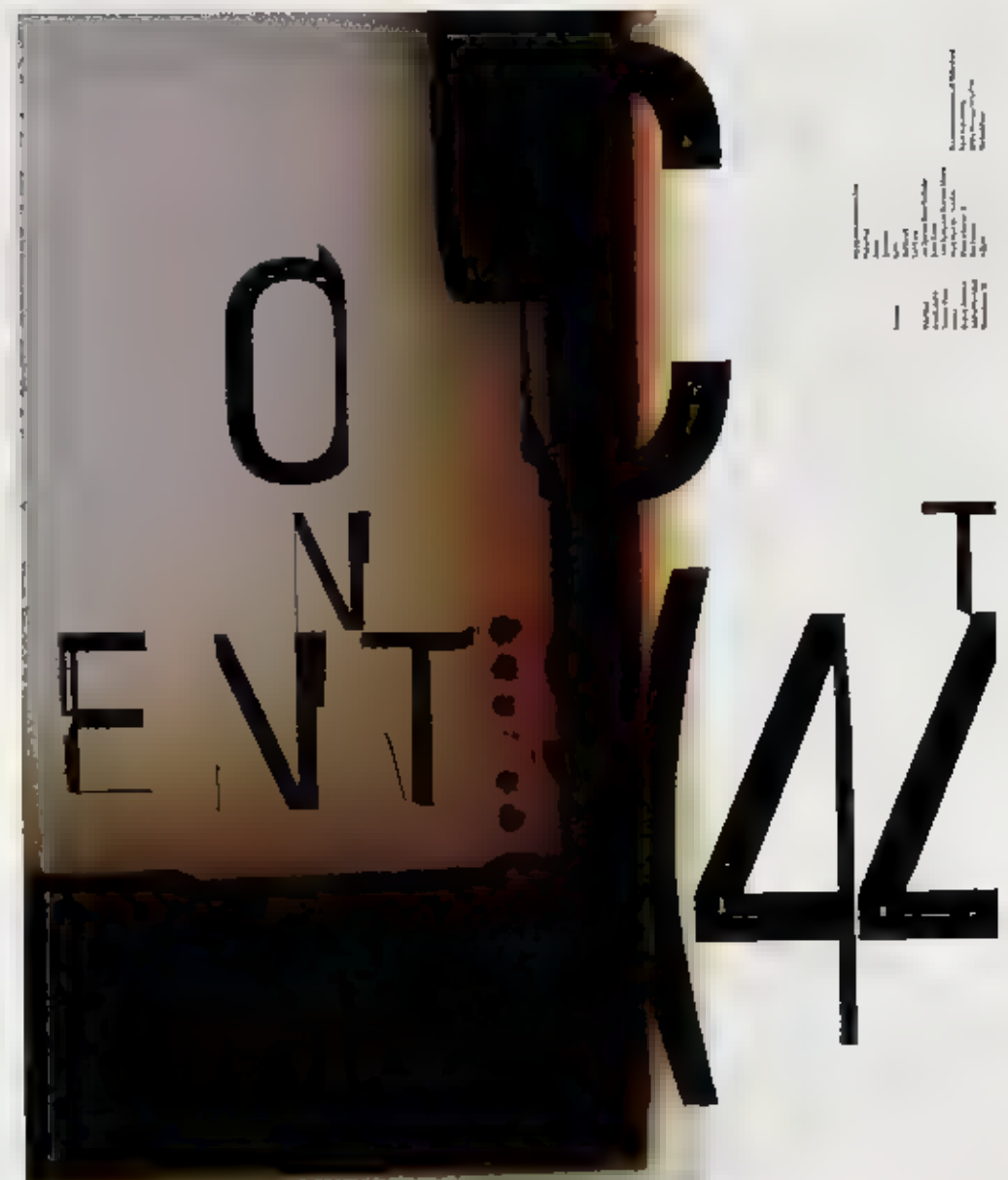
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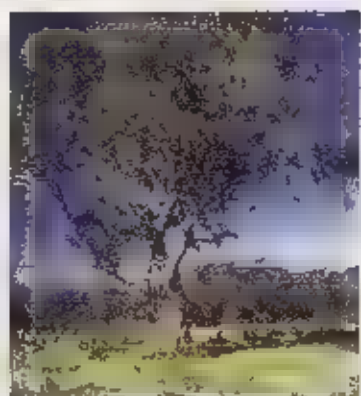
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HYBRID DIGITAL TYPEFACES



From underground experimentation to mainstream pop culture. Left, page from *Hybrid Digital Typefaces*, a self published book about experiments in generating fonts by Margo Johnson, 1993. Right, two pages from *Ray Gun 44* designed by Chris Ashworth, 1997.



In every typeface there is, irrespective of its purpose, a more or less independent esthetic value of form, which in turn also has its own direct expressivity.

IN EVERY TYPEFACE THERE IS, IRRESPECTIVE OF ITS PURPOSE, A MORE OR LESS INDEPENDENT ESTHETIC VALUE OF FORM, WHICH IN TURN ALSO HAS ITS OWN DIRECT EXPRESSIVITY.

Type as representation. Just as you can represent a tree differently by photographing or drawing it in a variety of styles, you can similarly represent a text differently by setting it in a number of type styles and sizes. Red type set in **Helvetica Bold** designed by Max Miedinger, 1957. Black type set in **Backspacer Round** designed by Nancy Mazzei and Brian Kelly, 1993. Quote by Karl Gerstner, from *Compendium for Literates*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 1974.

THE BEAUTY OF TYPE

There are at least two separate aspects to a typeface. First, there is the utilitarian/alphabetic aspect, which allows it to create linguistic meaning when letters are combined into words and words into sentences, etc. The other is the artistic aspect, the different type designs that express the alphabet visually in myriad ways. It is the latter that makes type so desirable because type users recognize the value of differentiation that a particular typeface design brings to their message. This is why they pick one typeface over another with such determination.

Obviously, type is functional as well, but not intrinsically so. First, the individual letters have to be arranged so that they make sense. Context is everything. Once this is accomplished, a typeface can make the spoken word and ideas visible, but it can do so in many different ways. In that respect, a typeface functions much like a photograph or a painting. Just as you can represent a tree differently by photographing or painting it in a variety of styles, so you can represent a text differently by setting it in a number of type styles and sizes.



Campfire. Designer unknown. From *Special Effects and Topical Alphabets* selected and arranged by Dan X. Solo, Dover Publications, Inc., New York, 1978

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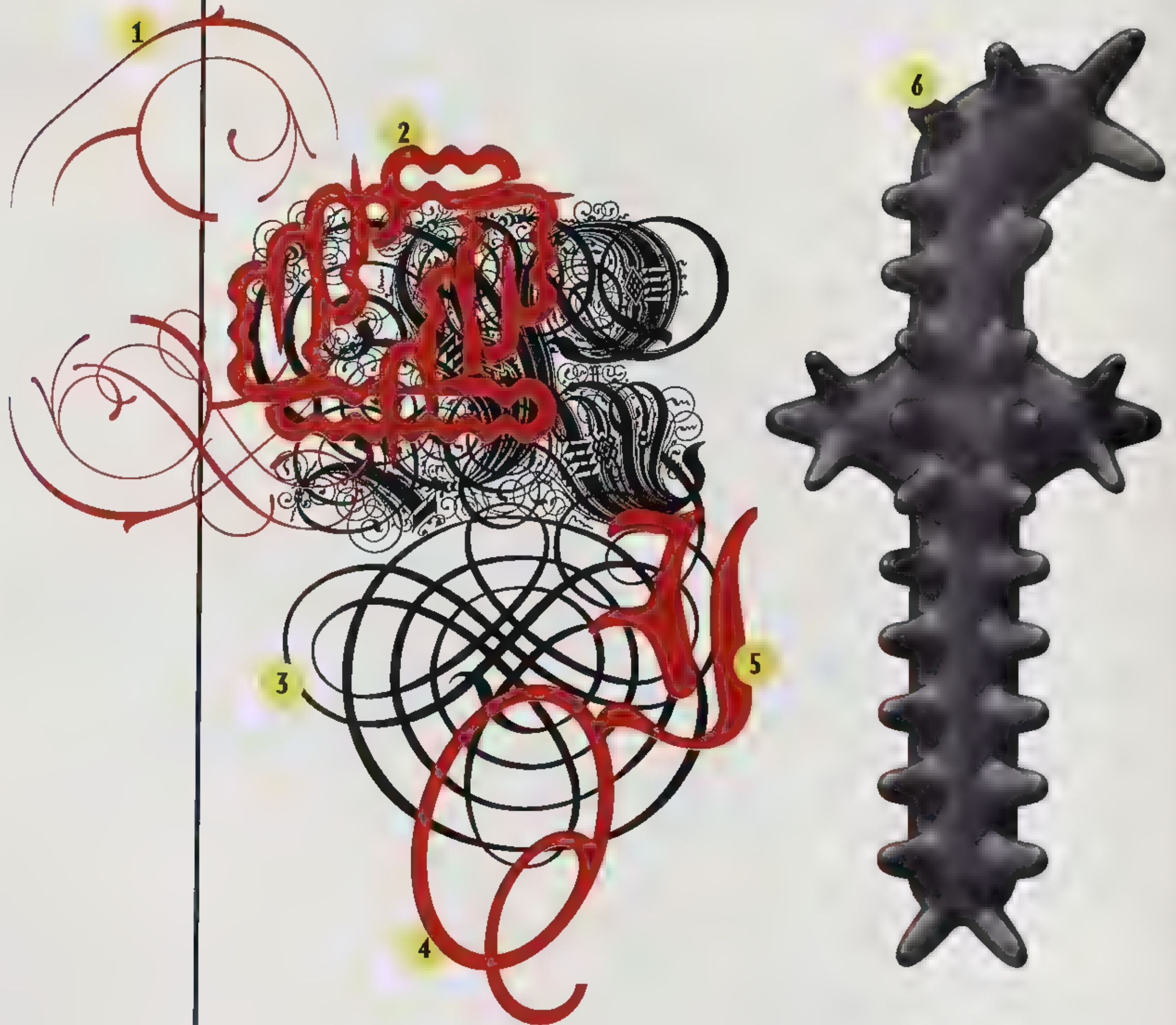
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Context is everything. 1. *Missionary* designed by Miles Newlyn, 1991. 2. *Narly* designed by Zuzana Licko, 1993. 3. Baroque initial designed by Paulus Franck, 1601. 4. *Soda* designed by Zuzana Licko, 1998. 5. *Sabbath Black* designed by Miles Newlyn, 1992. 6. *Polymorphous* designed by J. Abbott Miller, 1996. *Polymorphous* was based on Zuzana Licko's *Modula Ribbed* and was designed for heightened reading pleasure in intimate settings. 7. 15th Century initial as used by scribes in Lyons.

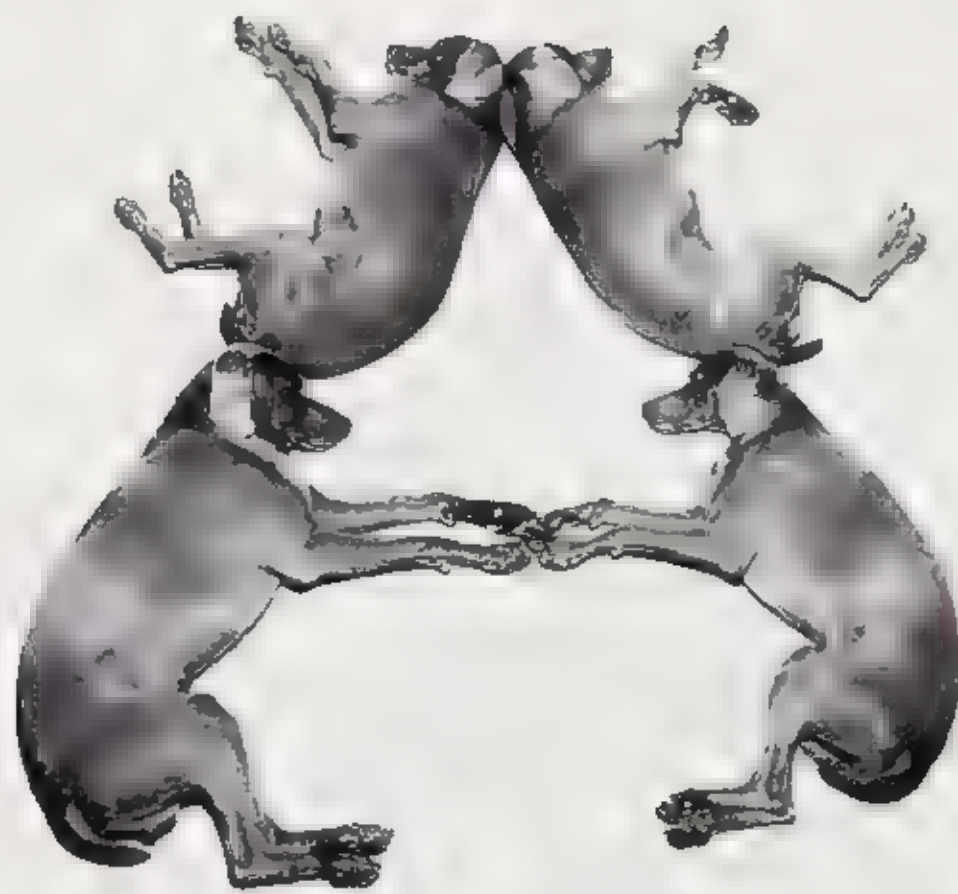
There are many typefaces that have artistic features that far outweigh their ability to communicate linguistic messages. In fact, there are typefaces that have artistic features that diminish and sometimes render the linguistic utility of the typeface completely useless, making it "illegible." Take the initial caps used in illuminated manuscripts, for instance. While they were considered to be the visual expression of the word of God, much of the verbal meaning was derived from the context in which they were used. It is not the individual letters that are functional. The utility of a typeface also heavily depends upon the intention of the user. Arrange letters arbitrarily and no linguistic meaning is generated, yet the visual, artistic qualities of the typeface remain and can easily be incorporated into all kinds of visuals.





Letters making a dog. The utility of a typeface heavily depends upon the intention of the user. Arrange letters arbitrarily and no linguistic meaning is generated, yet the visual, artistic qualities of the typeface remain and can easily be incorporated into all kinds of visuals. Left and below, illustrations by Mark Andresen using rub-off type.





Dogs making letters. A and B photographs by William Wegman. From the portfolio *Letters, Numbers, Punctuation* (1993), an edition of 26, each containing 44 Silver Gelatin Prints measuring 8 x 10 inches.

This raises some obvious questions; if a typeface is considered illegible, is it still a typeface? And where exactly does one draw the line between legible and illegible, or, for that matter, between typeface and picture? Take, for instance, the letters created by the artist William Wegman, which are made up of his dogs laid out on the ground to form letter shapes. Are they pictures of dogs, or pictures of alphabetic characters? Is this a typeface, or is this a photographic illustration? Probably all of the above, but what makes them so original is their distinct visual features, not their alphabetic utility.

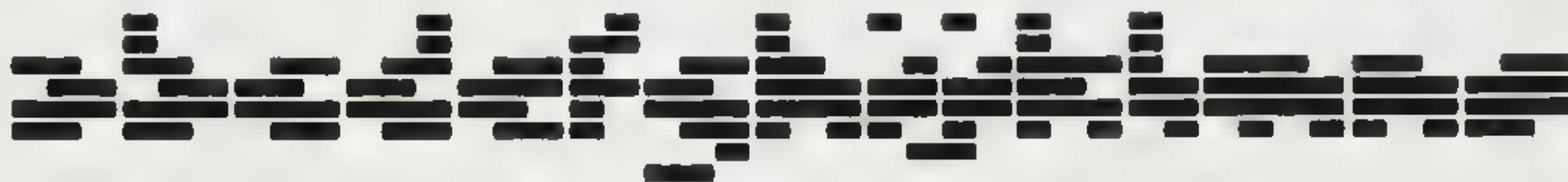
Regardless of the level of artistic authorship in a typeface, the fact remains that a typeface has a certain level of utility, which is exactly why it is considered unprotectable. What is problematic with this assessment is that *all* things visual have some level of utility; yet photographs, illustrations and most other visual expressions are usually granted the copyright protection that is denied to typefaces. What is the intention of the photographer when s/he takes a picture, and what is the intention of the painter when s/he sets out to do a painting, and the illustrator when doing an illustration? Isn't that communication, too? Aren't we asked to "read" a photograph much like we read a text? Take the photograph's "utility" as a container of meaning away and what is left? The illustrations in an airline safety guidelines booklet, too, function much like letters. By arranging the separate pictures in a particular order they create meaning – how to jump out of a plane, how to put on an oxygen mask, etc. Or, take a series of panels in a comic strip. Don't these pictures also function much like type? Take the utility of these images away or rearrange the pictures, and little is left. Yet somehow such illustrations seem to be considered by the Copyright Office to be without utilitarian function and are fully copyrightable, as are photographs, paintings and almost any other kind of visual art.



Black "i" from *Grog Caps*. Designers unknown. From *Special Effects and Topical Alphabets* selected and arranged by Dan X. Solo, Dover Publications, Inc., New York, 1978.
Red "i" from *Currency*. Designed by Vaughan Oliver. From *Fuse 10, Freeform*, 1994.

SMELLS LIKE TYPE...

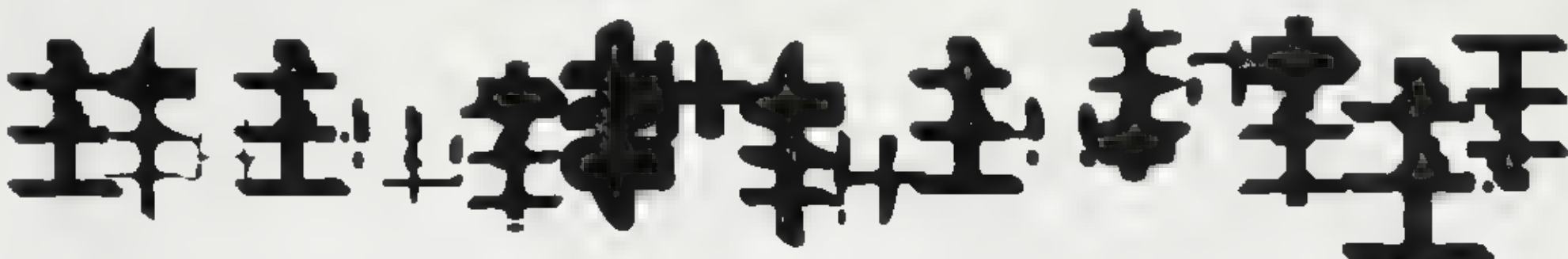
If a typeface is considered illegible, is it still a typeface? And where exactly does one draw the line between legible and illegible, or, for that matter, between typeface and picture? The below listed typefaces were all originally released as part of *Fuse*, an ongoing typeface design project edited by Jon Wozencroft and Neville Brody and published by FontShop International.



TV27HorizontalNormal. Designed by Mario Beernaert. Based on the shapes from a macro-photo taken off a television set; 27, because it is based on a 9x3 grid; horizontal, because the shapes are horizontal (Type and text from *Fuse, Auto 9*, 1994).



Currency. Designed by Vaughan Oliver. Random circular selections were extracted from overlapped sans serif and scripts. New tensions are created by strictly imposing a formal pattern on some rather emotive calligraphy – a machine finish to manual mark-making (Type and text from *Fuse, Auto 9*, 1994).



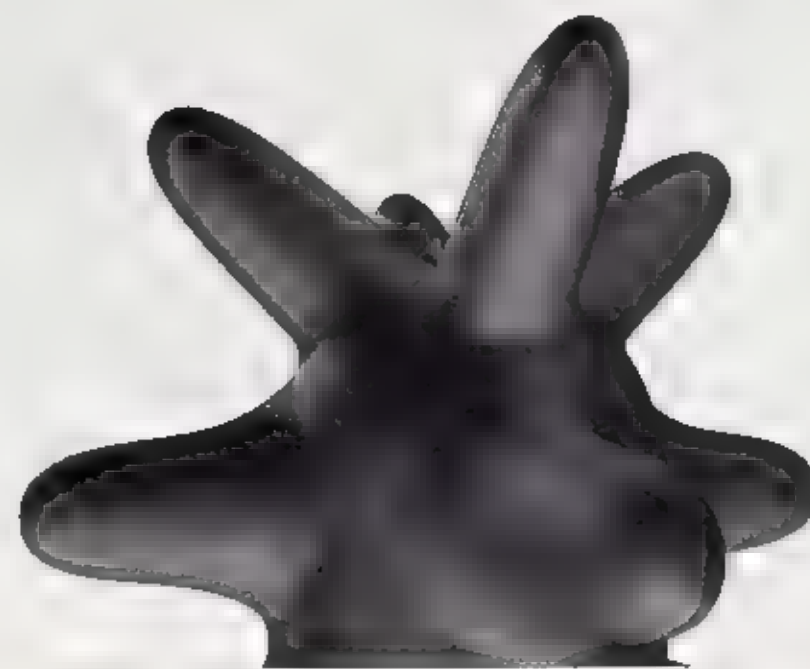
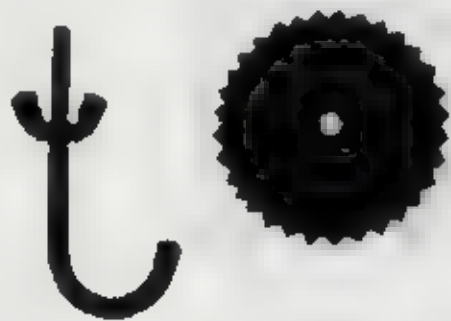
Freeform. Designed by Neville Brody. Freeform is an impulse that connects to the optical nerve net of cyberspace, whilst rooted in the primary convergence of magic, art and writing (Type and text from *Fuse 10, Freeform*, 1994).



Atomic Circle. Designed by Sylke Janetzky. Like the braille alphabet, Atomic Circle is based on a simple encoding of dots within a given area, in this case a circle and its periphery (Type and text from *Fuse 10, Freeform*, 1994).



Fibonacci. Designed by Tobias Frere-Jones. If you took a typeface and subtracted the alphabet, what would remain? Fibonacci takes written language and boils it down to an interlaced mass: each character has been replaced by fragments of the Golden Section, with weights and orientation dictated by the Fibonacci Series. With the alphabet subtracted, all that remains is the grid, the "grammar" of the system (Type and text from *Fuse 10, Freeform*, 1994).



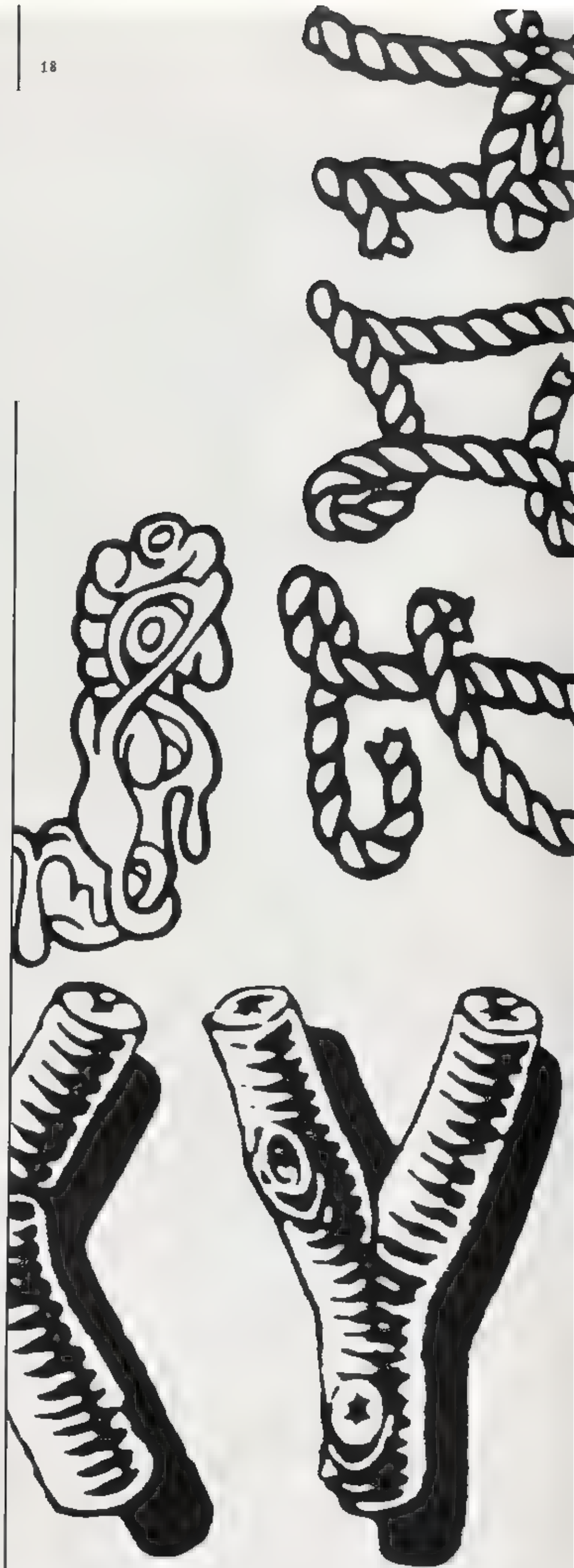
Type is in the eye of the beholder. Found-4 and Found-3 by Jon Wozencroft, from *Fuse 10, Freeform*, 1994.

Right, detail of *Polymorphous*, designed by J. Abbott Miller, 1996.

This exception of excluding typeface designs from copyright protection becomes particularly problematic in relation to typefaces that are pictorial. Regardless of William Wegman's status as a world-renowned artist whose dogs are the subject and object of thousands of pieces of visual art, the moment they laid down on the floor to create letters, according to the Copyright Office's ruling, they lost their status as dogs and became utilitarian objects whose shapes were in the public domain.

Similarly, it would be interesting to hear Disney, a company that rigorously protects its intellectual property rights, argue against anyone taking Mickey Mouse and manipulating him into a 26 letter alphabet. Of course, Wegman and Disney would make the argument that the parts that make up the letters, the photographs of the dogs and drawings of Mickey Mouse, are themselves copyrighted and trademarked icons. But what are most letters but shapes made up of various parts similarly copyrightable? There are typefaces that are made up out of tree parts; some are made out of intricate geometric shapes. BitPull, an electronic typeface designed by the Dutch type laboratory LettError, literally pulls together bits of images of any shape to form letters. I can create copyrightable art by combining any abstract or non-abstract element into infinite variations unless I arrange them such that they become recognizable as letters, at which point they fall in the public domain. An odd idea, don't you think?

The alphabet is a system, but it's an idea that exists without a single fixed expression. It materializes only after the letters have been fully rendered. This can be done in infinite ways, with each interpretation representing an original work of authorship containing significant expressive and artistic qualities. Typefaces, as I've pointed out, can even exist separately and independently of their utility. These are all characteristics that make most forms of art qualify for copyright protection. Therefore, to exclude all typeface designs across the board from copyright protection, simply because of their utilitarian aspect, seems arbitrary, particularly in light of the fact that most forms of art contain utilitarian functions. To exclude typefaces simply because it would be difficult to discern between what some perceive to be the existence of many look-alikes is also moot, since this problem is not unique to typeface design. Thousands of records, books, paintings and illustrations are produced each year, and each person has the opportunity to register his or her work with the Copyright Office. In case of a dispute, it becomes the court's decision to determine who may claim the work. Typeface designs, on the other hand, are simply not considered worthy.



What are most letters but shapes made up of individual parts separately copyrightable? Lariat, Grog Caps and Rustic. Designers unknown. From *Special Effects and Topical Alphabets* selected and arranged by Dan X. Solo, Dover Publications, Inc., New York, 1978.

If there is a positive side to the growing number of companies selling knockoff typefaces by the thousands, it must be that it indicates that the public has an insatiable appetite for type. While it might seem that the pirates are fulfilling a yeoman's job feeding the masses with inexpensive typefaces, it must not be forgotten that the fonts they sell are usually copied from others. Without copyright protection, however, little incentive exists for the companies and individuals who actually produce these typefaces to continue to invest in the development of new typefaces or the adaptation of existing typefaces to emerging technologies. Instead, we will be left with dozens of companies selling knockoff fonts, run by individuals who feel it is within their legal right to copy any typeface the minute it comes out. None has an interest in typefaces beyond their profitability, which is obvious by the complete absence of product source information. While their CDs often boast the inclusion of award-winning "designer" fonts, we are usually left guessing who these designers are. No design methods are discussed, and no references are ever made as to the source material of the typeface designs. While they might brag that we all stand on the shoulders of giants, they never disclose who these giants are, since historical references are never mentioned. Thus, the anonymity of both typeface origin and designers is perpetuated, and little by little, with each supersaver release, the heritage of typeface design is erased.

Typeface design is a living and breathing art form which, as Paul Elliman points out, imbues its models with attributes that "convey the dynamics of history, anthropology, linguistics, political science, sociology, economics and so on."⁵ It is a sad fact that we allow the people who are the least interested in typeface design, the knockoff companies who are tripping all over themselves to release poor quality derivatives, to benefit the most from it. I guess those typefaces, too, tell us something about our culture, but it's hardly something to be proud of. I would like to believe that Alan Marshall is right, and that the type industry and quality typefaces will survive. Copyright protection would greatly serve this ideal, but it's something that needs to be actively pursued. This article is one of my contributions to a much larger effort by type aficionados from around the world who are determined to win copyright protection for typeface design in the United States.*

5. Paul Elliman, *READING TYPOGRAPHY WRITING LANGUAGE*. Fuse 10, *Freeform*, Summer 1994.



* A diverse collective of type designers and specialists has formed an advocacy group determined to win copyright protection for font designs in the United States. TypeRight is an independent organization devoted to educating and informing the public about why copyright is needed for fonts and encouraging members of the digital design community to urge their Congressional representatives to amend U.S. law to protect typeface designs. Central to this effort is TypeRight's website, at <http://www.typeright.org>

THIS ARTICLE WAS SET IN:

The body text of this article was set in Base Monospace Narrow Bold 10/11 point. Captions and footnotes were set in Base 9 Regular, Italic, Bold and Bold Italic 6/8 point. The entire Base family was designed by Zuzana Licko and is available exclusively from Emigre Fonts.



Maggie Thatcher's Handbag

WD+RU Project Team:

Text: Teal Triggs

Design: Siân Cook



"If I were married to Margaret Thatcher I'd be sure to have dinner ready when she got home."

– George Schultz, former American Secretary of State



Part One

Maggie Thatcher is a cultural icon. She made the cover of the British style magazine *Blitz*, in December 1989, morphed with a portrait of the singer Madonna. "Was this the woman of the Eighties?" the magazine asked its readers. Both she and Madonna represented women who had "female power," who were in charge and in control.

Thatcher dominated British politics for almost a decade. Her longevity is marked by the number of nicknames she accumulated over the years: Iron Lady, the Great She-Elephant, Maggie Antoinette, Old Tin Knickers, Nanny, Attila the Hen, That Bloody Woman, etc. She was the first Prime Minister to have an ideology named after her -- Thatcherism. She encouraged an "enterprise culture," initiated the Poll Tax and sold off valuable government agencies in the name of privatisation. Thatcher was the media warrior during the Falklands War and skillfully avoided losing her job in the Westland helicopter scandal. In the international arena, she was Ronnie's playmate and gave a new right wing impetus to the "special relationship" that Britain continued to enjoy through the Bush years. Maggie was a woman who had managed to reach a position of power, who knew what she wanted and, more importantly, how to get it.

But exactly what kind of icon was/is Margaret Thatcher? And in this context of modern British feminism, does she have any relevance?

We've come a long, long, way.

- Virginia Slims, advertising slogan, 1970s



Today, Britain is dominated by female icons. The Queen, Princess Diana, Lily Savage, Myra Hindley, the Spice Girls, Tara Palmer-Tomkinson, Tamara Beckwith, Liz Hurley, Paula Yates, Claire Rayner, Dot

Cotton, The Fat Slags, Fatima Whitbread, Julie Burchill, Waynetta Slob, Melissa Messenger, Page 3 Girls, Dawn French, Patsy AbFab, Anita Roddick, Lynne Franks, Ulrika Jonsson, Camilla Parker-Bowles, Vivienne Westwood, Barbara Cartland, Mary

I'm a feminist, but I could never burn my Wonderbra.

- Emma, Baby Spice Girl, 1997



Whitehouse, Barbara Taylor-Bradford, Kate Moss, Jilly Cooper, Joan Collins, Stella McCartney, Naomi Campbell, Rosemary West, Sindy, Shirley Bassey, and still Margaret Thatcher.

Yet, ideologically, "feminism" is operating under a number of different guises: from "Female Power" to "Girl Power." You have everything from Riot Grrrls to Spice Girls, to Page 3 Girls to the latest phenomenon, the It Girl, who is "famously, famous for being famous."^[1] Many younger women are hesitant to be labelled "feminists" and in many ways feel "unable to identify with feminism as a political movement."^[2] Sad to say, despite recent feminist gatherings, such as the one held at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London ("Who's Afraid of Feminism," 1997), much of the dialogue has remained internal to an ever-decreasing clique.^[3]

Implicit in this situation is the problem of definition. Many women subscribe to feminist ideals

and goals but would not necessarily describe themselves as such.^[4] Different tendencies formed

[1] Charles Nevin. "Getting on famously" *The Guardian*, Monday 9 June 1997, pp.2-3.

[2] Ann Oakley. "A brief history of gender" in *Who's Afraid of Feminism: Seeing through the backlash* Ann Oakley and Juliet Mitchell, editors. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1997, p.46.

[3] In the recent Hollywood film *Batman and Robin*, feminism is thriving. In many ways, the film is a 1990s version of traditional feminist debate, which questions the tactics used by women in obtaining their goals. Batgirl, who

is portrayed as the college educated, computer-literate woman is accepted by her male counterparts as equal intellectually and in strength. On the other hand, the sensuous, *femme fatale*, Poison Ivy, deliberately uses her physical attributes to further her own causes

[4] Liz Davies. "Feminism after post-feminism" European Labour Forum pamphlet no.10, 1996, p.20. Davies also suggests that recent surveys demonstrate many women

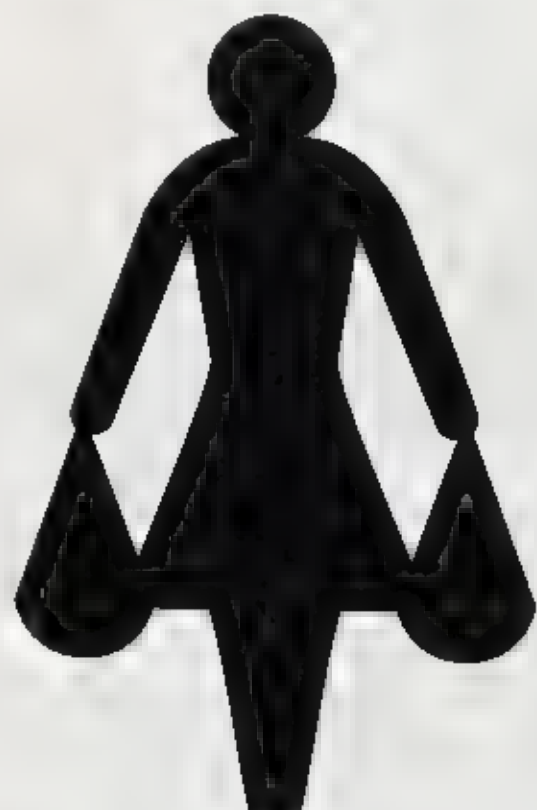
would still be calling themselves "feminists" when presented with dictionary definitions

within British feminism include radical, social and liberal feminists to more recent followers of the American writer Naomi Wolf. In part, this has resulted in the lack of any coherent voice, exacerbated by the fact that by the mid-1990s, Britain's best known feminist magazines, *Spare Rib* and *Everywoman*, had folded. Today there is a dearth of mainstream venues for feminist discussion, not only due to the lack of outlets but more importantly, as the writer Nicci Gerrard argues, because young British feminists are hesitant to commit their thoughts to print.^[5]

Notwithstanding this lack of emerging feminist writers, it is tempting to say that British television has capitalised on the power of the medium for the younger female generation. To take a much hyped example, Channel Four's *The Girlie Show* had hoped to introduce the statuesque, pierced, American, ex-Supermodel Rachel Williams as the new feminist spokeswoman. But somehow it went terribly wrong. The programme originally intended to reflect female empowerment went on to be televised every Friday night to fulfil the stuff of male fantasies.^[6]

In order to get ahead, women have to change the organisations they work in.

- Ruth Simpson, University of North London



(1981-c.1990). Today, while the issues are no less significant, fewer women appear to be taking to the streets.^[8]

Some critics have even said that feminism in Britain reached its peak with the election of Maggie Thatcher. But in actual fact, she was a (fe)male and she ran her government as an old boy's club. It was only "Maggie's Men" who filled her ministerial cabinet. She failed to be sympathetic to issues that concerned the feminist activists, such as "better

Inevitably, perhaps, there has been a backlash against feminism.

Susan Faludi and other writers have identified a new strain of male hostility, perhaps symbolised in Britain by the rise of "New Lad" culture.

Yet this has provided the impetus for feminist reflection and regrouping. While 1970s feminism encouraged women to be "liberated," the backlash blamed feminism for the dissatisfaction women were feeling as a result of pushing back sexist barriers. Women, the anti-feminists argued, "are enslaved by their own liberation."^[7] But on the contrary, it is clear that women's rights are still an issue, whether it is concerning childcare, single parenthood, or equality in the workplace.

Direct action has also been a controversial issue, historically speaking. During the early days of feminist activity in Britain, many events made national and international news. This included "Reclaim the Night" marches (1970s), Women Against Pit Closures (1984-5, 1992), and the Greenham Common peace movement

[5] Nicci Gerrard "The new feminism. Hello, boys..." *The Observer Review*, 27 April 1997, p.5. It must also be mentioned that underground British Riot Grrrl fanzines and feminist comics are fast becoming vehicles for the rise of a new feminist movement in Britain. See Teal Triggs, "Look back in anger: The Riot Grrrl revolution in Britain," *ZED*, 5, forthcoming.

[6] The show continued to cause scandal in the British tabloid press when it was revealed

the American presenter was indeed a lesbian. Instead of "celebrating" the coming-out the conservative tabloids used it as a means of reinforcement and continued their stereotyping of feminist activists.

[7] Susan Faludi. *Backlash: The undeclared war against women* London. Chatto & Windus, 1992, p.2

[8] The latest call for "feminist uprising" comes from a decidedly capitalist source, namely the Swedish manufacturer, IKEA,

who have produced a new advertising campaign specifically targeting the British market (1996). Appropriately entitled "Chuck out the chintz," British women are seen throwing out old chintz curtains and upholstered furniture into a skip and dutifully marching en masse singing IKEA's liberation song. The advert plays upon and spoofs the collective feel of Britain's 1970s protest marches

health and social services, more rights at work, an open, caring community."^[9] And, while credit should go to her for achieving such a position of power as a politician and a woman, she played by the boys' rules. In the end, the only clue to the femininity of Margaret Thatcher is her handbag.

But in 1997, things are changing. With the rise of New Labour, women are now enjoying a higher profile and more democratic representation in government. The election this year provided 119 female MPs in the House of Commons, and a significant move by Tony Blair to appoint five women to his Labour cabinet. With the emergence of digital technology, women are increasingly able to do their work at home and look after their children, rather than be chained to office desks. Women today do not want to compromise their chosen roles as mothers or relinquish their rights to femininity. These are significant steps forward.

The "personal is the political."

— women's campaign slogan, 1970s

Designers could help revalidate what have been designated as 'female' values and devalued as such.

Sheila Levrant de Bretteville, 1973

During the 1970s, the women's movement was about "bringing personal issues into politics."^[10] Traditionally, it has been female artists who have dealt specifically with ideas of feminism, representation of the female body, the male gaze, the body as a personal exploration and collective redefinition. Female designers who wanted to base their work on political activism used the "emotional" impact offered by non client-based work. Many women drew upon their design skills in an attempt to engage with personal or female politics, voicing their concerns using traditional graphic languages and techniques. Despite this, the work has often been aligned with fine art or craft-making — areas which had historically been accepted as part of the female domain. This, in some ways, has proven to be highly problematic for female graphic designers. Those who are dealing with feminist issues in their work are all too often positioned outside and not within their own design profession.

[9] Susan Alice Watkins, Marisa Rueda and Marta Rodriguez. *Feminism for beginners* London: Icon Books, 1992, p.130

[10] Sheila Rowbotham. *Women in Movement. Feminism and social action* London: Routledge, 1992, p.275.



Part Two

Every weekday morning I take the 9:11 Thameslink train to work at the Elephant and Castle. And, every morning, while waiting on the platform I am confronted by a series of advertising hoardings for a chocolate ice cream called "Galaxy Bar." This week, the image is of an erotic belly dancer, her breasts thrusting forward restrained only by the bejeweled fabric of a scanty bikini top.

This dancer reminds me of something out of a British "Carry-On" film as she looks upwards, her sensuous red lips poised to receive the phallic-shaped dark chocolate candy bar. The headline reads: "Whatever you do, try me." Should I take this seriously?^[11]

The cultural historian Judith Williamson wrote in 1978: "Advertisements are one of the most important cultural factors moulding and reflecting our life today."^[12] Alarm bells would not be going off in my head if this particular advert were an isolated incident. On the contrary, the "Galaxy Bar" is only one of a number of campaigns that are highly suggestive. Remember the controversial Cadbury Flake commercial with the young woman who, in a tight, close-framed shot of her bright red lips, delicately takes a long and calculated bite out of the chocolate bar? And recently, a new men's magazine has used an image of a scantily clad woman in hiking gear standing on top of a mountain with the headline: "It's true: working out can give men the body they want." Sex, I am afraid, sells.

So, if advertisements are supposed to give some insight into what is going on around us today, then what does the advertising landscape of Britain actually suggest about the current social condition? I would propose that despite the bra burning of 1960s radical feminism, Germaine Greer, Gloria Steinem and *Ms.* magazine, we haven't really moved any further in terms of the representation of women and everything that this might embody culturally and socially. The advertisement on the train platform seems to imply that early British and American feminist revolutions have not had much of a long term impact. The paradox is that we are easily led to believe that women have been liberated. However, somewhere hidden amongst the patriarchal rhetoric, women are often still viewed as sexual objects.

Okay. So where does this leave us? Today we have the feminist writers Camille Paglia and Naomi Wolf alongside the (British) all-girl pop-band the Spice Girls. The popular media has given us "Girl Power," where we can be assertive but still "feminine" (witnessed by a vitamin iron supplement advert with the copyline "Get Girl Power"). Poison

[11] It must be said that this particular campaign spoofs a number of different gender stereotypes. However, when viewed as an isolated image, the belly dancer still highlights the problems of female representation in British advertising campaigns.

[12] Judith Williamson. *Decoding Advertisements* London: Marion Boyers, 1978, p.11

A funny thing
happened on
the way to
work...

Ivy tried it in the Hollywood film *Batman and Robin*, but failed when the "strong-willed" Batgirl entered the picture. We are led to believe that we can play hard ball with the boys and sometimes they will let us win. But get real, who's kidding whom here?

It's not just the advertisers using female stereotypes (they also use male stereotypes as part of their visual lexicon), but what scares me is that these advertisements are possibly representative of what might be going on in the minds of the targeted audience. Thatcherism, and 1980s political correctness, paved the way for the rise of a "New Laddism", young British men who think it is a post-modern joke to publish magazines like *Loaded* and *Eat Soup*. Likewise, the areas of typography and graphic design have established old boy and "New Lad" networks symbolised by football clubs and pub crawls. Despite some efforts by the designer lads to invite women to attend these events, the reality is they often feel excluded and, as a result, marginalised.

This is the broader context in which our group, the Women's Design Research Unit (WD+RU), was founded in 1994. WD+RU began its life as a group of four women, Siân Cook, Karen Mahony, Liz McQuiston and myself. We took our name from the first British design consultancy team set up in 1942 by Misha Black, Milner Gray and Herbert Read, which they called the Design Research Unit. In our early discussions we decided that it was appropriate for WD+RU to focus its initial efforts to work within the field of visual communication. Our members are familiar with the established design and educational networks and each is able to draw upon personal experiences as a woman in the workplace. We have always worked as design practitioners, educators, and writers.

As an organisation, WD+RU is established on the basis of flexibility. Members can drop in and out, depending on workloads, family commitments and project interests. Not all members contribute to each and every project. A WD+RU member may forward ideas to the group and those of us who are interested will get involved. Each project, therefore, has a revolving "Project Team." And, sometimes, and where appropriate, the team is joined by an external collaborator who brings in a different viewpoint or specialist expertise.

In order to state our aims, we wrote a manifesto about women's role in design and technology. Our main intent was, and still is, "To safeguard and empower 'women's voices' in design and new technology, as well as develop dialogues with those who are interested or actively involved in research or practice in these areas." The manifesto formed part of our first WD+RU publicity packet. These were all handmade, with Siân at the sewing

machine stitching in WD+RU information coupons and me preparing and putting stickers on the cardboard folders. Because of the nature of the batch production process, we were only able to produce a limited number. The next round of WD+RU publicity took the form of a printed *BROADsheet*: Issue 1 (Autumn 1996, much less manual work!). This sheet, as well as our forthcoming Issue 2 (Summer 1997) have been funded by Phil Jones, and his organisation Real Time Interactive, of Real Time Studios, London. Because of his generosity we were able to increase our print run, thereby reaching many more students and designers.



A number of WD+RU projects have dealt with girls making career choices, as well as addressing stereotypical views concerning women's roles within a technological realm. "Smart Fun!" is the first in a series of printed posters that investigate what young girls from age 8-16 think about computers. Responses taken from questionnaires distributed among WD+RU family and friends in the USA and UK form the basis of the poster's text.

The intent is for the poster to encourage girls and boys to use computers. The poster would be distributed to schools and is meant to be hung in the classroom. WD+RU Project Team. Siân Cook and Teal Triggs

WD+RU has a group of Friends and Associates, including designers, writers, and educators who have been ardent supporters of the cause from the beginning. They number among them: Jonathan Barnbrook, Sheila Levrant de Bretteville, Katherine McCoy, Diane Gromala, Lucille Tenazas, Sylvia Harris, Bethany Johns and Gert Dumbar (see side bar for full list). Naturally we are very grateful for their interest and input.

At this point, I think it is also important to mention that one of the main reasons we all got together in the first place was because of what happened at FUSE '94. As typographic conference attendees, we witnessed a dominant platform of white, middle-class, male speakers. Whilst acknowledging the expertise and professional prominence of these typographers and graphic designers, WD+RU felt the lack of female presence was a blatant act of omission on the part of the organisers. Ironically, therefore, the conference was instrumental in bringing the issue of women in design out of the proverbial design closet and into a public forum. We started by wanting to draw attention to the need to readdress the gender imbalance found within Britain's graphic design and typographic professions. At the same time, WD+RU is interested in raising awareness of women working in the field. We asked why there were so few women in Britain profiled and how we could go about changing this.

FUSE '94 was good for us in another way as well.^[13] Jon Wozencroft who is editor of the floppy disc formatted *FUSE* magazine, asked WD+RU to design an experimental typeface for *FUSE* 12: "Propaganda". Taking Jon up on the offer, we formed the first WD+RU Project Team, consisting of Siân Cook, Liz McQuiston and myself. We set out to design a typeface, collaboratively, which said something about how the user might challenge and reassess conventional stereotypical women's roles. The typeface was called "Pussy Galore" after the *femme fatale* heroine played by Honor Blackman in the James Bond film *Goldfinger*.

It was essential in Pussy Galore that the visual language employed had to be accessible to the user. This is one reason why we based the characters on vernacular icons such as male/female toilet signs. Technology aided us

[13] The following year, WD+RU was invited to speak along with the German women's design group *Moniteurs* at FUSE '95 held in Berlin. Although some considered WD+RU's involvement as tokenism, we felt it was an important first step toward the recognition of women in design.

FRIENDS Jonathan Barnbrook, London • Sheila Levrant de Bretteville, Yale University, New Haven • Patty Carroll, Chicago • Stephen Coates, London • Gert Dumbar, Studio Dumbar, Den Haag • Ann Ferebee, Institute for Urban Design, New York City • Malcolm Garrett, AMX Digital, London • Diane Gromala, University of Washington, Seattle • Bethany Johns, New York City • Tony Jones, Chicago Art Institute • Katherine McCoy, Illinois Institute of Technology, Chicago • Lucille Tenazas, San Francisco • Michael Twyman, University of Reading, Reading • Lorraine Wild, CalArts, Los Angeles • Graham Wood, Tomato, London • Sylvia Harris, Brooklyn • James Woudhuysen, London • Jon Wozencroft, London • Phil Jones & Annie Eaves, Real Time Studio, London.

ASSOCIATES Ghalia and Widad Abbas, Dubai, UAE • Jim Bodoh, London, England • Tania Chalfoun, Beirut, Lebanon • Hazel Clark, Kowloon, Hong Kong • David Cook, London, England • Solange Coutinho, Recife, Brazil • John Davis, London, England • Gayatri Doongursee, Bombay, India • Ruhi Hamid, London, England • Muneera Hashwani, Karachi, Pakistan • Chaz Maviyane-Davies, Harare, Zimbabwe

'Friends' and 'Associates' constitute a statement of general solidarity with WD+RU and its aim to encourage women working in design. However the views, opinions and tone of image making expressed by WD+RU are entirely its own, and should not be seen or construed as the views, etc. of those listed above.



in establishing a forum where users were invited to construct a gendered language. We wanted to dispel myths about women and allow for the exploration of language structures. The computer and its keyboard were considered vital to this process. As an interactive tool, the user was encouraged to develop new thought processes while they worked their way through four levels of positive and negative women's roles and the language frequently used to describe women.^[14]

Pussy Galore is still a "working" typeface and is continually being transformed and developed as the need arises. For example, Karen Mahony and her team at Mahony Associates, with Siân Cook and myself, created a videographics screensaver titled "PC?" based upon the hysterical woman character from our typeface. By adding another character – this time a stereotypical British man in a bowler hat – we could play upon gender relationships. For example, we created an animated sequence where a woman knocks off the man's head with her Thatcherite handbag. Hysterical women scream "Aaargh!" in utter frustration and others are transformed from dumb blondes to she-devils. But in the last frames, men and women come together in harmony and as equals. We know that all too often a group like WD+RU can be accused of taking itself too seriously. The issues we are dealing with are highly complex and problematic, but sometimes you have to laugh. We feel very strongly that humour should be an important element of our work and that it is this aspect that facilitates an "outsider's" access to our messages.

"PC?" was intended to reach beyond the graphic design community to those using ordinary office PC computers, and also plays upon the notion of political correctness. Imagine an office secretarial pool with a digital presence that invades conventional spaces and encourages active exploration into what may lay outside normal constraints of the workplace. "PC?" was launched as part of *And She Told Two Friends*, a major international exhibition on women graphic designers



held last year at Woman Made Gallery in Chicago.

Even if WD+RU is a relatively new group, it is worth noting that the context of sexism within the industry is not. Patricia Allen Dreyfus wrote, in a 1970 article "Women's Lib and Women Designers,"^[15] "Despite its acknowledged hospitality to women, the field is not totally free of inequities." She cites

a number of possible reasons for this, including mid-career drop off due to marriage and family commitments, "chauvinism" among men in the workplace, ghettoisation of women's roles, lack of high profile role models, and demands placed upon talented female students in educational institutions. The design studio was an environment that could just as easily infringe upon women's rights as did the world outside. Dreyfus reported that out of 50,000 people in 1970 who earned a living in the "design" area, ranging from art directors, graphic designers to layout artists and illustrators, 75% were male with the other quarter female practitioners. This also mirrored the enrollment ratio found in art schools, where 65% were male and 35% were female students.

Two decades later, there is evidence that some progress has been made within educational institutions. Recent figures in UK art and design colleges indicate a slight shift to a more equal gender balance. Almost 60% of students enrolling are female compared to about 40% males. But this shift, while greeted favourably by feminists, still does not take into account to what happens to these women after graduation or, indeed, explain why the progression of women into senior management positions should be so slow. Also, it is worth noting that women designers are often found working as either collaborators or employees of agencies or design studios, rather than proprietors.^[16]

America boasts a substantial number of female designers reaching the upper echelons of the profession. Amongst a growing number of successful women graphic designers are: Katherine McCoy, Lorraine Wild, Rebecca Méndez,

[14] For a detailed account of the creation of Pussy Galore and how it operates see: Teal Triggs, "The Making of Pussy Galore" *Baseline* 20, 1995, pp 25-28

[15] Patricia Allen Dreyfus, "Women's Lib and Women Designers" *Print* May/June 1970, pp.29-35, 74, 76.

[16] The design historian Martha Scotford, following her 1992 survey of the American Institute of Graphic Arts membership,

concluded 33% of her female respondents owned their own studios as opposed to 42% male ownership. Martha Scotford, "Messy History vs. Neat History: Toward an expanded view of women in graphic design" *Visible Language* 28.4, Part 2, Practices, July 1994, p 376

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The identical landscape is associated with Hudson in Mendicino's autobiographical narrative. In the placement of characters within the scene, an individual's status is laid out through a spatial hierarchy. Each actor's role is accorded by space and character, as in the case of the two women guests, and operates the same together. Lynn Spiegel comments on "The Secretive Home Community":

In the Sub-Saharan African country allows the doors to be closed on the use of the market world. The domestic support is then to a large extent based on rural development programs that there is.

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The television and radio may be out but the news is
made more direct and more taking place in the city
from a wide horizon. The "Chicago Tribune Age
Mirror" announces what her children wanted to
be when "grown and up" as an individual family
the "Chicago Tribune" were after the community for more
progressive. In the "Chicago Tribune Age Mirror"
many more rights of children are given the
the and in the new world control for a variety of
and only construction of the community.

The "Kopten" is a small tribe of these living in the suburbs, and is considered as a specially mixed group. Communication with the reality of the city is in part, indirect, maintained and vice versa in small doses, such "satellite village" is well known. They are connected by some jobs and, at the same time, village by craft and "artisan" chemical enterprises, etc. In addition, the author described these networks as the "primary system" of mixed races. 2-3 lines

[illegible]

out) for the suburban landscape, the telephone creates a distinctive space which is both public and intimate. Conversations that take place with larger public gathering places and markets that are individuals is still the composition of the signal emanating from the act of their own house. The entire scene is dominated by the act of conversation.

[illegible]

he took the Department of Defense in America as an example as electronic RESEARCH being mainly in the form of research in military and naval work. The Government COMMISSION was provided by a collection of these electronic. By 1955, the general public could access the Internet as the digital codes were passed, and Internet began to spread up globally. The other organizations was a company

The traditional 1950s American Democratic found anomaly seeking in her suburban boyhood, had emerged as the typical suburban epiphany. Dennis Hirschway recognizes the little line between nation, nation and social reality. Her response that the culture is not a simple structure in the household as a result of the gaining between public and private. In about, the culture does not depend on community as the model of the organic family. They are his children, and within him she and communal women of HERMONE structure.

The domestic space has moved into the digital realm—it is there, but not there real time, at the same time, a simulation of what is tangible, and what is digital.

Barbara Glauber, Ellen Lupton, Sheila Levrant de Bretteville, Sylvia Harris, Lucille Tenazas, Paula Scher, Deborah Sussman, Laurie Haycock Makela, April Greiman, Marlene McCarthy, and Bethany Johns. The question is: How can the UK catch up?

One such way is through raising awareness. Much of WD+RU's work has taken the form of lectures, presented at design conferences and in art and design colleges, both in the United Kingdom and abroad. This has provided students and designers viable forums for establishing necessary dialogues with male and female colleagues. WD+RU is interested in initiating informed debates about issues that affect both male and female designers. After all, we are a "multi-inclusive" organisation and welcome men and their contributions. The discussions that have taken place highlight areas concerning aspects of design management structures, equality in the workplace, career opportunities and the effects of the "glass ceiling." They have also included traditional stereotypes and women's role in the home, as well as issues surrounding childcare.

Often the design and national press in Britain have provided other WD+RU platforms that have been useful in continuing this kind of debate. For example, we have been featured in *Blueprint*, *Eye*, *Baseline*, *I-D* and *The Guardian*

newspaper. One of the more fruitful experiences came from a feature on WD+RU for the Swedish design magazine *Cap & Design*. As a result of the article, we were offered and accepted an invitation to speak about WD+RU at the Brev Paper Design awards in Stockholm last December.

Yet, there is still a problem. Britain has successfully exported a number of male graphic designers, including Malcolm Garrett, Tomato, Jonathan Barnbrook, Peter Saville, Vaughan Oliver, and Neville Brody, but very few British women have been recognised so visibly for their achievements. Although there is a marked increase in women joining the profession, writer Liz Farrelly suggests that "Women seem to be either reluctant to draw attention to themselves, or resigned to playing second fiddle as assistant or associate to a male chief."^[17] Many of Britain's women designers are quite happy just to get on with the job, and leave the spotlight on their male colleagues. There is a reticence toward self-promotion that sometimes results in being overlooked by clients who favour designers with high profiles and trendy affiliations.

At the moment, there is still a lot that can be done. WD+RU will continue its work until the problem no longer exists. Above all WD+RU is an enabling project.

*The future is not up to us,
it is up to you.*

We try harder.

– advertising slogan for Avis rental cars.
coined by Paula Green, Doyle Dane Bernbach



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[17] Liz Farrelly, "Mysterious absence at the cutting edge" *Eye* 19, 1995, pp.6-7

EMIGRE COLLECTORS ISSUES

Emigre No.3

1985 : \$50

Features a sampling of work from photographers, illustrators, writers and poets. First intensive use of Zuzana Licko's coarse-resolution Emigre Fonts throughout the issue.

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Designed by five graphic designers. Each designer produced a graphic documentation of personal travel experiences.

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1987 : ALIENATION : \$50

A photographic/typographic experiment by Stefano Massei and Rudy VanderLans. The issue features a mixture of type and image experimentations inspired by television and advertising language and imagery.

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1989 : AMBITION/ FEAR : \$50

This issue has interviews with 15 graphic designers from around the world. The interviews are centered around the initial response to the introduction of the Macintosh computer. Featured are Matthew Carter, Jeffery Keedy, Malcolm Garrett, Rick Valicenti, April Greiman, Max Kisman and others.

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1990 : HERITAGE : \$50

Swiss designers discuss graphic design, culture and tradition. Introduction by Wolfgang Weingart. Interviews with Richard Feurer (Eclat), Hans-Rudolf Lutz, Polly Bertram, Daniel Volkart, Hamish Muir (8vo) and others. Includes 24 page insert designed and produced in Zurich, Switzerland.

Emigre No.16

1990 : SOUND DESIGN : \$50

Learn all about Bruce Licher's Independent Project Press & Records, James Tawning's BLACKmusic label, Nancy's Magazine, VEX and many other unbelievable enterprises and creative projects mostly overlooked by the masses. This Issue also features interviews with Emigre's recording Artists Stephen Sheehan, Every Good Boy and Fact TwentyTwo. Cover designed and printed at Independent Project Press by Bruce Licher.

Emigre No.17

1991 : WISE GUYS : \$50

This issue focuses on the work of graphic designers Edward Fella and Piet Schreuders. Edward Fella practiced as a commercial artist in Detroit, Michigan for 30 years before returning to study graphic design at the Cranbrook Academy of Art. While at Cranbrook, and currently as a teacher at Cal Arts, his idiosyncratic style has influenced many young graphic designers throughout the United States. Piet Schreuders, a self-taught graphic designer based in Amsterdam, Holland is best known for his publication *Furore* and his book *Lay In, Lay Out* in which he accuses the graphic design profession of being criminal. Also included is an essay on Fella by Lorraine Wild.

Emigre No.18

1991 : TYPE-SITE : \$50

Issue number 18 further explores the unknown possibilities of type as an expressive/communicative medium. This issue features a 16 page typographic experiment by Paris based designer Pierre di Sciullo. The pages presented are an adaptation of several chapters from issue No. 8 of *Qui? Resiste*, a journal published by Sciullo. For this issue, titled "Reading Manual," Sciullo designed a phonetic typeface named Quantange, a design which, as much of his work does, fluctuates between applied and Utopian research. Also included in this issue is Beowulf, the first typeface generated with "Random Technology." Eric van Blokland and Just Van Rossum, the two young Dutch designers responsible for random technology, raise the question, is best really better? Also featured is a special project created by London based graphic designer Phil Baines, titled "Clear Enough to Read," which is a continuation of his St. Martin's School of Art thesis "The Bauhaus Mistook Legibility for Communication."

Emigre No.27

1993 : DAVID CARSON : \$50

This issue features a lengthy conversation with graphic designer David Carson. Known for his art direction and design work on such notable and influential culture tabs as *Beach Culture* and *Roy Gun*, Carson answers questions ranging from the perceived (il)legibility of his work, personal experimentation, type design and design competitions, while firing off a few good questions himself.

Emigre No.42

1997 : THE MERCANTILE ISSUE : \$50

Due to overwhelming demand, issue 42 was relegated to collector's status within weeks of publication. This was the first issue printed in full color, and also the first issue of Emigre which was mailed free to qualified people on the Emigre mailing list. If you're lucky, you can still find an occasional copy at your local newsstand at the original cover price of \$7.95. Articles include "Design(er) Type or Graphic designers who design typefaces (and the typographers who forgive them) by Mr. Keedy. "Decay and renewal in typeface markets: variations on a typographical theme," by Alan Marshall. "On Classifying Type" by Jonathan Hoefler, plus "Walking in the City," a review by Andrew Blauvelt of the graphic design exhibition "Mixing Messages: Graphic Design and Contemporary Culture."

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SPACE PROBE

INVESTIGATIONS INTO
MONOSPACE

BASE MONOSPACE

DESIGNED BY ZUZANA LICKO

AVAILABLE FROM EMIGRE® FONTS

The body, or vertical measurement, of a font is known as the "em-square". In a digital font, the em-square has a resolution commonly divided into 1,000 equal units.

Each character in a monospaced font is of the same width. The character width can be expressed as a number of em units.

The relationship between the character width and the em-square can be expressed as a ratio.

The standard point sizes for computer screen display are 9, 10, 12, 14 & 18.

Applying each of these ratios to each point size results in the character widths per size. The "magic numbers" are highlighted, these sizes yield an even number of points, resulting in an exact match between the screen display spacing and that of the printed page.

A common purpose of a monospaced font is to accommodate a particular number of characters per inch, this is called the "pitch". (For example, a 10 pitch font will set 10 characters into an inch, a 12 pitch font will set 12.) There are 72 points to the inch, so the characters per inch count is calculated by dividing 72 by the character point width.

Alternatively, characters per pica can be calculated. There are 12 points to the pica, so the characters per pica count is calculated by dividing 12 by the character point width.

	Base Monospaced Narrow					Base Monospaced Wide					
Em-square Units	1,000					1,000					
Character Width In Em-square Units	500					600					
Ratio Decimal Equivalent	1/2 0.5					3/5 0.6					$\frac{(\text{char width})}{(\text{em-square})} = \text{ratio}$
Each character is 50% of its point size; at 10 point, each character is exactly 5 points wide.					Each character is 60% of its point size; at 10 point, each character is exactly 6 points wide.					<div>↓</div> $(\text{pt size}) \times (\text{ratio})$ $\frac{72}{(\text{pt size}) \times (\text{ratio})}$ $\frac{12}{(\text{pt size}) \times (\text{ratio})}$	
Standard Point Sizes	9	10	12	14	18	9	10	12	14		18
Character Width (In Points)	4.5	5	6	7	9	5.4	6	7.2	8.4		10.8
Pitch Number of Characters Per Inch	16	14.4	12	10.9	8	13.3	12	10	8.6		6.7
Pica Character Count (Number of Characters Per Pica)	2.67	2.40	2.00	1.71	1.33	2.22	2.00	1.67	1.43	1.11	

SPACE PROBE:

Investigations into Monospace

Occasionally, we receive inquiries from type users asking us how many kerning pairs our fonts contain. It would seem that the customer wants to be dazzled with numbers. Like cylinders in a car engine or the price earnings ratio of a stock, the higher the number of kerning pairs, the more impressed the customer will be. What they fail to understand is that the art of kerning a typeface is as subjective a discipline as is the drawing of the letters themselves. The fact that a particular typeface has thousands of kerning pairs is relative, since some typefaces require more kerning pairs than others by virtue of their design characteristics. In addition, a poorly spaced typeface will indeed require more kerning pairs to correct its spacing errors than a typeface that was optimally spaced to begin with. Therefore, the need for a large number of kerning pairs could actually be indicative of a poorly produced font. High kerning pair counts are also misleading because the font can be poorly kerned or kerned in a way preferred by the font designer, not the end user. Finally, the user should keep in mind that the kerning pairs provided in a font are most suitable when the font is set with regular tracking; when tracking is changed, particularly when it is tightened, this usually requires modifications to the kerning pairs.

At the opposite extreme of kerned typefaces lie monospaced fonts, many of which manage to be highly legible despite the fact that they contain not a single kerning pair. Monospaced fonts assign each character an identical width, whereas proportional typefaces use varying character widths, which position individual letters on set widths that vary depending on the width of each character.¹ When combined to make words and sentences, the individual letters appear to be evenly spaced and kerning is used to further optimize spacing between difficult combinations. Monospaced typefaces were originally designed to deal with the mechanical restrictions of composing systems such as the typewriter, which forced each character to have the same single set width. Thus, the narrow "i" is set on the same base as the wide "w," resulting in a somewhat irregular looking letter spacing. Base Monospace, as its name implies, belongs to this category of typefaces characterized by letter designs that each occupy a single set width, like the infamous typewriter font Courier (designed in 1956 by Howard Kettler), and the many other monospaced fonts that inspired its design.²

The difficulty with monospaced fonts is that they do not easily conform to traditional notions of good typography. Traditionally, when setting a text, the object is to maximize spacing and kerning to a point where a text appears an even "color" when viewed at reading distance. However,

1. Monospaced Versus Proportional Spacing

monospaced
typeface

In a monospaced typeface, such as Base Monospace, each character fits into the same character width

proportional
typeface

In a proportional typeface, such as Filosofia, each character width is different to accommodate the particular width of each character.

2. Filling the Mono-Space

The first step in designing Base Monospace was choosing the model character width. To facilitate a harmonious relationship with the screen fonts, the goal was to select a character width that would have a simple ratio to its em-square. The obvious first choice was 100%, or 1:1 the simplest ratio of all, but this idea was discarded since this would have yielded a typeface too wide for practical purposes. Eventually, the 1:2 ratio (50%) was selected as the character width for Base Monospace Narrow, and the 3:5 ratio (60%) was chosen for Base Monospace Wide.

Since every character in a monospaced typeface must fit into the same space, character shapes become stretched and squeezed.

c f i l

Some characters, such as the "c," "f," "i," and "l," were made wider than usual to fit into the model character width.

d m w

Other characters, such as the "d," "m," and "w," were made narrower than usual to fit into the model character width.

il mw

This stretching and squeezing of characters becomes particularly problematic in the heavier weights; there is usually not enough room to accommodate both the thickness of the stem weight, as well as the complexity of some characters such as the "m" and "w." The stem weights must therefore be adjusted, and although the stem weights of the "i" and "l" (left) are heavier than the "m" and "w" (right), the overall color density is the same when set in text (below).

Wow, lil
willow mirror
mom morrow.

while this might be desirable visually and esthetically speaking, it does not automatically render the text more legible. In fact, perhaps, even the opposite is true. When you have perfectly rendered type printed on the smoothest of papers and impeccably kerned, a text can easily appear too stark and machine-made looking and might, in effect, overshoot the mark of legibility.

Monospaced typefaces, on the other hand, live safely on the "vernacular" side of legibility. When set in text, they do not generate a silky smooth image on the page. The "i" "l" and "j" usually float in their spaces, while the "m" and "w" are squeezed in, creating a somewhat jarring text image. Still, monospaced typefaces might have a leg up in the legibility department. Since the typewriter was an affordable and easy to use typesetting tool, it rapidly became the standard for academic, business and legal writing, and for formal and informal correspondence. Despite its esthetic handicaps, it was able to establish a look and feel that became accepted as a highly functional means of communication all over the world. If it is true that people read best what they read most, then monospaced type must contain plenty of features worth considering when exploring legibility.³

When effective communication is the ultimate goal, it makes sense to consider the tried and true and to sometimes forego imposing preferences that favor esthetics. Base Monospace is designed with this in mind. Its slightly irregular spacing generates an "informal" look reminiscent of typewriter text, but also of the more intentionally informal look of text often seen in today's more progressive and experimental publications. No doubt many designers will argue against this idea, dismissing Base Monospace simply as a typeface with inferior spacing and therefore difficult to read. After all, we read words, not letters, they'll argue, and "proper" spacing increases the cognition of word shapes. Many words, though, have the same shape, so we cannot ignore the issue of creating individual letter shapes that are easily distinguishable from each other and spacing that emphasizes this. Perhaps the squeezed look of the "w" in Base Monospace makes it look more like a "w," while the open space around the "i" amplifies its "i"-ness.

It is always the challenge of the type designer to create characters that together form a coherently designed alphabet, yet are different enough from each other to distinguish themselves. These are extremely challenging parameters that allow for limitless experimentation. Stanley Morison in his *First Principles of Typography* wrote: "It is always desirable that experiments be made, and it is a pity that such 'laboratory' pieces are so limited in number and in courage. Typography today does not so much need Inspiration or Revival as Investigation."¹ Base Monospace is one such investigation. To complete the experiment, we count on your reaction.

AAA WWW

One solution to accommodating a bold character is shifting the weight from one part of the letter form to another. These "A" and "W" variations show some of the options. Ultimately, the choice is determined by which is most harmonious within the overall typeface design.

3. Alternate Character Forms

A A

In a monospaced typeface, the spacing can be improved if the characters fill out their spaces evenly. For example, the "A" with vertical sides (left) forms more evenly distributed white space in its character cell and will therefore have fewer spacing problems than the "A" with diagonal sides (right):

HHHHH HAHAAH
HHHHH HAHAAH

rr rr

Similarly, the wider "r" (left) is preferable to the narrower "r" (right), although the aesthetic form of the narrower may be more pleasing outside of the monospaced context.

mmmm mmmmm mmmmm mmmmm
mmmm mmmmm mmmmm mmmmm

The wider "r" (top line) creates fewer spacing problems than the narrower "r" (bottom line) when set in text.

W w W w

The spacing characteristics of the various forms have to be balanced with the recognition or legibility of the forms themselves. Therefore, although the "W" and "w" have similar spacing problems to those of the "A," the diagonal-sided "W" (left) was chosen over the straight-sided "W" (right) to improve letter shape recognition, since the straight-sided "w" could easily be confused with an m in text settings:

WOW WOW MOM WOW WOW MOM

S S

Sometimes the selection of one character variation over another is a choice between the importance of its aesthetic form versus its function within the rest of the typeface. Although the open "S" (right) may have been more appropriate from a formal standpoint, the enclosed "S" (left) was chosen; its vertically curved end strokes enclose the space more effectively and therefore more clearly define the interior versus exterior white space. This reduces spacing problems, as well as gives the appearance of a narrower form that fits more comfortably within the fixed character space.

SPACES SHAPES ASHES
SPACES SHAPES ASHES

1. Stanley Morison, *First Principles of Typography*. New York. The MacMillan Company, 1936.

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platelet **\$95**

3 Fonts

designed by conor mangat

AaBbCcDdEe
 FfGgHhIi
 JjKkLlMm
 NnOoPpQq
 RrStTtUuVv
 WwXxYyZz12
 34567890

platelet thin
 platelet regular
 platelet heavy

Another monospaced design in the Emigre Fonts library is Platelet, designed by Conor Mangat in 1993. With a relatively narrow character width of 462, Platelet sets just slightly narrower than Base Monospace Narrow (at approximately 92%).

The inspiration for Platelet came from the California license plate. Similar to the composing restrictions of the typewriter, the manufacture of license plates also requires the use of monospaced type; not only for mechanical requirements, but also to fulfill the need of fitting a fixed number of characters onto each plate while maximizing their legibility at a distance. The primary purpose of a license plate, of course, is to identify a vehicle, and the California Department of Motor Vehicles has had various numbering sequences since its inception. For example, when an earlier series of license plates carrying six digits was quickly exhausted by the fast growing number of automobiles, the current seven digit model was adopted, which has undergone several schemes of number and letter arrangements. When the DMV runs out of serial numbers next time, it would be difficult to increase the number of digits to eight, since seven is the maximum number of digits that humans can reliably remember; hence the seven digit phone number. Perhaps future license plate serialization schemes will be increased by adding characters such as %\$*#@!?, or even symbols and pictures.

While Platelet is perhaps too fanciful for application on standard license plates, its usage might be suitable for the vanity plates, which the DMV offers at a higher price, to further differentiate them from standard plates. The vanity plate owner is allowed to choose a customized arrangement of characters that usually spells a name, word, visual pun, palindrome, etc. Since the

characters on vanity plates usually have a meaningful arrangement, they are immediately more memorable than a string of random characters, and therefore the design of the letterforms could afford a lesser degree of legibility.

Platelet contains some unexpected solutions to the various problems facing monospaced designs. It also offers solutions that address the reduced legibility of geometric designs, which have a tendency to render many characters indistinguishable, thus reducing their function for text applications. The "m" and "w" cleverly solve the density problem of the three stems by shortening the middle one. The "i" and "l" fill their width not with the standard extended serifs, but with a large curved lead-out stroke. Another creative solution is the lowercase "b," which incorporates the upper case form within the lower case character. This increases the recognition factor of the "b," which would otherwise be very similar to other characters, such as the "d," due to the geometric rigidity of Platelet's letterform construction.

THE READERS RESPOND

DEAR EMIGRE,

I take strong exception to Knoxville Bill Gubbins's cry that the writing in *Emigre* no.41 stunk. He's wrong. The article called "TRUT: The Star, The Globe, and the Missing H in the New Veracity" is not crap. I know because I wrote it.

My essay was no weepy autobiography. I started with five short sentences about my own life's particularities. I then added a new word to the English language. ("Trut is the mutable concoction of facts employed for an ulterior purpose.") Look for it in the next edition of *Oxford English Dictionary*. I don't know if they get that in Knoxville but I'll bet you can order it on the Internet. Then in about 3-1/2 pages I laid forth a cogent explication of my new theory. And I managed to pull it off without one ellipsis! Your letter writer probably didn't get through 17% of the words in the magazine before he decided to fire off his dismissive epistle. I invite this person - I invite all of *Emigre*'s complainers - to do something radical: Read the magazine. Move your lips if you have to. Use your index finger to help your way across each line of text. Consult *Hooked on Phonics*. Read my little essay. Let me know what you think. Am I dead-on right? Am I all wet? Is my conclusion passable but my reasoning laughable? Writers need readers, not measurers. Most *Emigre* letters to the editor don't even mention what was in the prior issue - they're just jumping-off points for talking about how sorely the jumbo format is missed. Sometimes writing for *Emigre* is like story time at the preschool - you try to get through one page without a pretty picture and the kids start picking their noses, examining their boogers, asking for the bathroom key, and interjecting smart-aleck comments like "There's no one who thinks that Norman Pearlstine is the editor of *People*." Zero ability to focus.

While I'm at it (and I am at it) I'd love to get some feedback on my contribution to *Emigre* no.38 - "Bosnian Typography Essay." It's the first thing ever published in Stephen Farrell's Manuscripts Folio typeface. It starts with the numeral 816610, runs down the right side of each spread thereafter, and ends with my signature. In it, I use this brilliant new typeface - based on 500-year-old manuscript pages - to call for the capture and prosecution of war criminals responsible for the Massacre of Srebrenica in June 1995. Read it and tell me that I can't write, that *Emigre* doesn't publish anything worth reading, that you long for the old format like a weaned 4-year old misses his mommy's teat. Read. Read. Read.

Daniel X. O'Neil, oneild@rudnickwolfe.com

DEAR EMIGRE,

First off, I want to voice my distaste for letter columns that degrade into petty bickering and infighting. Believe me when I say that I would not write again if I did not feel that I was grossly misunderstood in my original letter in *Emigre* no.41. When I suggested that *Emigre* "include a warning label on any future issues with 'confusing' covers" I was, of course, being sarcastic. I thought that this was quite obvious but evidently not so. Though I was surprised to see any response to it at all, I am, however, not wholly surprised at the content. As an undergraduate in design school, I find myself surrounded by the sort of pseudo-anarchism espoused by Mr. West, surrounded by those wishing to disturb the "prescribed and imposed order." Upon being asked to enumerate their motivations, the usual answers are that the world is becoming increasingly corporate, that people are being lulled into complacency, and that the status quo rules. While I think all of these points are highly debatable, let us assume them to be true. Are random and unfocused acts of "disrupt[ion] of the logical order" going to alleviate our problems? I find that quite unlikely.

More likely, I believe, is that much of the current vogue for "interrupt[ing] the habitual" and "applaud[ing] the odd," is a widespread manifestation of the adolescent need to be different and rebel, rather than a reflection of an honest desire for social change. Of course, when everyone is trying desperately to be an individual, we are left awash in a sea of wackiness that soon grows tiresome; an imposed order is replaced by an imposed disorder.

That is not to say that I endorse the reactionary pleas of many of the "old school" of design, who, it seems, would have us only use five typefaces or other such nonsense. Variety and flexibility are necessary parts of design. There is a large gap, however, between finding one's own personal working method and style and consciously trying to be "different." Here, my mind immediately goes to firms such as *Emigre*, *The Designers Republic*, and *Tomato*, which I view as positive role models. I do not surmise that they have much interest in any sort of trendy social rebellion, but they stand out nonetheless because they are simply good at what they do (i.e. they have intelligence and style). Other firms, such as *M&Co.* and *Fuel*, do indeed make social and political activism a large part of their agenda, yet do so in what I feel is an intelligent and focused way.

I guess that is really the key: is one attempting to shake up the system to make a point or simply for its own sake? If the second case is true then I, personally, am neither particularly interested nor impressed. Finding *Emigre* in the car and truck section is interesting and amusing because it was by chance; an accident. Were it by design, a conscious choice to disturb order (without reason), I would find it vacuous and dull.

Mr Sean DeVoe

P.S. It seems you're not the only ones challenging order. Recently, I came across the current issue of *Eye*, whose cover is a collage of headlines from British men's magazines, on the shelf with those magazines. Perhaps, if you design a really nice warning label for yourself, you could send some copies of it their way.

THE READERS RESPOND

DEAR EMIGRE,

Though in the past I subscribed and enjoyed the discourse on occasion, I let my paid subscription pass. I just couldn't take much of the graduate school combat critique of some of your writers — as if there are enemies in design. Perhaps I have too many memories of my own schooling, where everyone vied for the dominant posture of what painting or poetry should or shouldn't be. Though I have plenty of opinions, I simply try to work beautifully with what I prefer. My own mission impossible is to be as competent as I can with my own learning curve. Your issue no.42 is marvelous, though. Not only did I like every article; I felt prodded, as well as vastly enlightened. I don't mind the ads, and the magazine as catalog is savvy and functional. Plus, it impels me to spend money with you.

My own work entails book design but also graphic design with several longtime, hopefully long-term, clients. I do posters, flyers, brochures, newsletters, tickets, catalogs, t-shirts, cd booklets, jewel cases, etc. Though of the School of Legibility, I aim for "thelorious" composition. All of my clients like me. I'm happy to have neither an axe to grind nor a war to win. I do steal ideas (because Picasso said so) though I don't think I mimic. In the kind of books that I do, authors prefer unabashed elegance. Me, too — though with a few distinctive touches. Someday I might be really good at it.

I love William Caslon, Frederic Goudy, Eric Gill, W.A.Dwiggins; my mentor is Clifford Burke — I love the whole tradition. I love what you all do. I overuse my Big Cheese but I don't care. Please find a check for more of your various goodies.

Yours truly,

J. Bryan, Albuquerque, New Mexico

DEAR EMIGRE,

Hey, a quick note on a hot afternoon here in San Francisco. I have enjoyed Emigre since I was a frustrated architecture student at Wurster Hall. You have evolved gracefully and it has been great to grow with you. I applaud your recent decision to include more advertising to support your endeavors. Reinvention is the way to survive.

The Mercantile Issue is a great read for us type junkies, especially for those like myself who have little or no historical typographic education. Keep up the good work. Maisha merufa! (Long life!)

Brion Scott, Boon Design, Internet

DEAR EMIGRE,

Hi! I am a student, I love your work, and I am often confused about what is good and what is bad design. I know what is wrong, and I am very adamant about it. Using other fonts to design your own is wrong. Distorting fonts in Illustrator and re-releasing them is wrong, and this so-called "grunge" fad is wrong. Grunge fonts offer one "random" treatment of each letter, so as soon as you type the same letter twice, you've destroyed the message and killed the random effect. These fonts suggest that language is static by repeating their false interpretations of words in motion. I hate them, and I won't back down.

So that's what's bad in my eyes.

What is good?

With the recent purchase of Fontographer, my school obtained 80 megs of fonts included on the software CD. Three of these megs were different versions of Bodoni: Euro Bodoni, URW Bodoni, and just plain Bodoni. Looking through them, I noticed drastic differences, and after a while, decided I liked plain old Bodoni better than the Euro or URW versions. But how do I know what is right? How do I figure out what is an accurate interpretation of Giambattista's hand and not a sour revival? (I have been eating up the Authentic Issue no. 38; I love the material discussed throughout.) How do I know whether or not Filosofia is way off? (Though it is my fave, and the Bodoni I chose closely resembled Filosofia.) I suppose I can only go by gut feeling. I go with that same gut feeling when I see Matthew Carter's Big Caslon, and, as respected as he is, it makes me unwell.

Part of me says, "Do research and find out what's right!" But surely Big Caslon is the result of much research, yet it still brings forth unpleasing results in my eyes. I don't quite know what to think. I don't want to be misled into becoming attached to an inaccurate revival.

Thanks,

Alon Greene

DEAR EMIGRE,

Emigre no.42 was fabulous! The typography exhibited within pleases the eye as much as it agrees with the comprehension portion of the brain. Not only are the letter forms themselves attractive, but the way they are set on the page really puts a smile on my face, enabling me to efficiently understand the ideas you're aiming to express. It's difficult to find good typographic design these days, with a million Joe Schmoe's running from their Macs & PCs to the print shop with 25 shareware "true?" type display faces sitting together on one page.

Respect to negative space. Good communication. Balancing esthetics & function.

Please, keep it up!

Jeffrey Eckman, Internet

THE READERS RESPOND

DEAR EMIGRE,

Congratulations on your decision to increase your readership base. It was no doubt a difficult decision, and I'm pleasantly surprised that you made it.

In your introduction, you questioned whether or not your method of publishing "was simply defeating its own purpose." For a long time it's done just that. Since about 1991 (during graduate school), it's been nearly impossible to read *Emigre* from cover to cover. A lot of the brilliant thinking published in your pages seemed to echo within some pretty well defined walls of academic culture. No doubt it's a fascinating sound, but where is the relevance? A good deal of *Emigre's* pages have been devoted to cultural consumer-based criticism. Why haven't "they" been in the room for the chat? And so much talk of "the margin" and "zombie modernism" these days. Such tough talk in such a small room. If a culturally based discussion is framed to elicit change or expand discourse, it seems logical and appropriate that it reach a wider audience. The long-standing rift between graphic design academia and practice is already deep enough, so it seems kind of hollow to plod through yet another brilliantly framed intellectual fencing match, complete with throbbing, painfully voluminous footnotes. *Emigre* could be a viable channel for more confluence between practice and academia to unfold.

Finally, your honest affirmation of *Emigre* as a commercial endeavor is thankfully based on delivering products that are long on integrity and quality. It's refreshing to see you put your money where your mouth(piece) has been, and I'm excited to see what happens next.

Michael Shea, Internet

DEAR EMIGRE,

My brother and I love *Emigre*, and we also find many of Rudy's designs (as seen in posters, books, and, of course, the magazine) very inspirational. But I must state that I was a bit disappointed with the cover of no.42. (I tried looking at it and looking at it, but the photograph along with the use of that yellow isn't PIMP, no matter how you look at it.)

I am also writing because I have a concern. No.42 was devoted to type. I am wondering if in fact the essays about type are anything more than trivial writings.

My biggest problem was reading Mr. Keedy's essay, which got my award for being the most difficult to read. At times I was confused, enraged with disagreement, and also bored. As I had to decipher many of his sentences, I also began to wonder if Mr. Keedy has a degree in obfuscation, as well. I know that Mr. Keedy does have quite a reputation for designing/writing about type, but I found it ironic that he states in his intro: "I realize that decoding the meaning embedded in letterforms requires a degree of literacy and critical distance which I lack, so..." Besides the fact that I disagree that type is as deep as he is hinting at, I thought that we must really be going to hell if a reputable type designer and teacher such as Keedy doesn't possess a degree of literacy and critical distance needed to understand letterforms.

Mr. Keedy never clearly answers "What graphic designers are actually communicating to the rest of the world through...typefaces." I use typefaces created by type designers and graphic designers alike. Typefaces by both have made great contributions to my designs, but I must say that the typefaces that I turn down because they suck, are horrible, ugly, and unsophisticated usually happen to be created by graphic designers. Mr. Keedy doesn't mention that many of the ugly and unsophisticated typefaces that are out there were created by graphic designers. I see it as follows: there are good fonts and there are bad fonts out there - from type designers and graphic designers alike. I would really have liked to hear him argue how typefaces express "graphic designers' interests and aspirations," as noted in the intro - as if typefaces are comparable to artistic metaphors capable of revealing the self. If one wanted to know something about Neville Brody or Carlos Segura as designers, would one look at what they have designed in general or merely their typeface designs? There were little bits and pieces found in the articles by Marshall and Hoefer that were interesting, but for the most part I really wasn't impressed with what they were about. I applaud *Emigre's* philosophy of questioning the status quo and engaging in philosophical discussions about design. But I'm not sure that this issue was conducive to such dialogue. Respectfully yours,

Gory Williams II, Santa Monica, California

THE READERS RESPOND

DEAR EMIGRE,

Welcome to the world of strip shopping centers and corporate buy-outs. I just received my free issue of *Emigre*, along with an invitation to subscribe FREE for the next year. After looking through the issue, I realized why it is free. There is no more cutting-edge design and interesting discussion -- only filler material whose intention is to sell space to advertisers, judging from your back page questionnaire, or sell mailing lists. It was very good while it lasted.

Lisa Drenning, Birmingham, Internet

DEAR EMIGRE,

Just received issue no.42. Wonderful. Love it. I would like to request a second copy so that I might pass it on to a cranky anthropology professor who has resisted my arguments about the cultural charge of typefaces. While he wants all papers presented to him in Times Roman, I have been arguing that it is the typeface of the "Cultural Imperialists," and therefore urging that he permit the use of other typefaces. Your articles this month are even better than previous articles, and no.42 may give me just the ammunition I need to bring this fellow around to a new way of seeing (reading) things. Therefore, if you could please rush me an extra copy, I will then take it in to him and say, "there," in so many words. I cannot promise this request will bring you new business, but it can't hurt.

Yours sincerely,

KTR, Internet

DEAR EMIGRE,

First of all, good luck with your new marketing venture. I hope it works out for you.

Secondly, I'd like to comment on Mr. Keedy's article about graphic designers creating type. I agree with much of what he says, but what he neglects to mention is the tremendous educational value typographic creation has for the graphic designer.

All the minutiae and detail that went into the creation of my first font (naive and trendy as it may have been) taught me so much more about type than any of the typographic courses I took in art school. As a result, I feel I have a much better sense of typography and that my work is stronger for having had the experience.

I highly recommend the experience to anyone out there who works with type. You may not produce the next Garamond, but you will certainly improve your understanding of typography. I cannot imagine Mr. Keedy, as a producer of type, would disagree with this. I would think that he, as a purveyor of fine typography, would welcome anything that serves to educate the consumers about his product.

Thanks for the thought-provoking article!

Sincerely,

Michael MacKenzie, Internet

DEAR EMIGRE,

I want to offer my humble congratulations on combining content -- thoughtful, informative and relevant -- with design and typography that truly shows off the beauty of the *Emigre* fonts used.

Wow, who would have believed five years ago someone would be responding with such descriptions? To be honest, I have had a sketchy experience of your work over the years. I guess I know enough about the influence *Emigre* has had on the graphic design community and the audience that you have throughout the world that I can say that some people will look at typography and graphic design in a different light because of this issue. This stuff has always been around, yet it sometimes takes looking at simple truths in the light of today's climate to keep them alive and relevant -- this applies to the basic core truths of existence as well as design and typography. Anyway -- to cut the rambling -- the articles are historically informative, thought-provoking and neutral (not in the Swiss sense) in the endless debate on "this or that" design philosophy or style. And your typefaces look damn good.

One thing I did notice was that I had a problem believing that all the ads were real. I was sure that the Phil's Fonts ad was a satire on the Image Club, etc. cheap font packages brochures I get in the mail every month. I called the 800 number and got a recorded message so I guess they are real. I look forward to seeing future issues of *Emigre*.

Richard Moore, Internet

DEAR EMIGRE,

Just received your announcement re: going free with the mag. Bravo! I couldn't justify the expense of subscribing to *Emigre* -- because as head of marketing and communications for a large performing arts organization, I already have to pay for a zillion publications that are music-and art-related -- but our designers REALLY need to sharpen their type design skills and your magazine will be widely circulated, you can be sure of that!

Anyway, who among us can complain about advertising? Isn't that essentially how we all make our respective livings?

Yours,

Sandy Robertson, Director of Communications, Philharmonic Society of Orange County, Internet

THE READERS RESPOND

DEAR EMIGRE,

How nice not to read the following in *Emigre* no.41: "The dominance of space as the constitutive fabric that regulates meaning in graphic design has to be radically augmented by the possibilities of time to regulate meaning." (*Emigre* no.40, p.16). So much more refreshing to gather meaning via narrative structure and personal voice. Perhaps due to a shared nostalgia with my own (musically directed) 70s high school experience, I appreciated this very un-*Emigre*-like embrace of "magazine"-ness. From proto-Interview to Academic Journal to issue no.41, is this an evolving mutation or merely aberration?

Underlying many of the narratives is the notion of the magazine as mirror of the self, a defining point in the construction of identity. And these designers' identities have taken root in the soil of their personal discoveries. Rich in the high-fat content of *People*, *Wet* and *Billboard* (not to mention *Pringles*), this 70s media compost still lives in a lot of us thirty-whatever media constructs. We absorbed and now give back. Rightfully, many Gen-Xers may have found *Ray Gun* to be their *Wet*, (both were packaged lifestyle guides), but it seems the content and point of view at *Wet* drove the design, not the other way 'round. I sense the larger point of *Emigre* no.41 is to be found in the chance encounters we have with these cultural mirrors called magazines, and the personal windows they become, whereas *Ray Gun* comes off more like a kaleidoscope; amusing, great tasting, yet less filling.

Alan Hill, NYC, Internet

DEAR EMIGRE,

PRAISE THE LORD, HALLELUJAH! I was an avid fan of *Emigre* in the late 80s, early 90s, when I was introduced to the magazine by one of my design professors. I lost track of you over the years and recently attempted to track you down. I checked bookstores, called Information trying to find a phone number, everything. Finally, I decided you must be defunct. My sadness was compounded by the inclusion of some *Emigre* work in a current show at SFMOMA.

And then, today, your latest issue fell into my hands. I just took you up on your offer of 4 free issues and I am so thrilled. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

Karen Templer, Associate Art Director, *Salon Magazine*

DEAR EMIGRE,

I just received issue no.42, my first. I have seen older issues that were much more impressive in terms of delivery (and I don't mean the Postal Service).

Anyway, I'm more of a content guy (shame, shame), so I put that observation aside.

Enough about me, I'd like to take a quick jab at something: I haven't finished "Decay and Renewal," and although I don't like the tone of the article (I loved "Design(er) Type," so I'm not anti-*Emigre* [yet]), the problem for me is the typeface. At this point, you're saying "Oh, not another moron who doesn't understand us/anything." A rock band's logotype doesn't have to be legible, but a long article does. People read best what they read most? So where's this one guy who reads a lot set in *Filosofia*? At that point size and in such a light color, it's a strain. Just look at it. If that's your purpose, okay. If you're experimenting, okay too. Wanna let us know? No? That's OK, too, as long as you know the effect it really has. Jury still out (as your "First Ten Years" book says).

Grant Papazian, Internet

DEAR EMIGRE,

Now that I have filled out my form for the free subscription, I feel ready to let you know what I think of the changes you have made.

When I first began to subscribe to *Emigre*, it was clear that the magazine was meant to be different from the usual design magazines on my local bookseller's rack. It succeeded: it was unique in size, design, fonts and editorial content.

I was sorry to see the magazine reduced in size, but I certainly understood the economic benefits in creating and mailing a smaller piece. Still, the magazine was uniquely designed, it still had its unique typographic style, and the content remained as weighty as ever.

Now that the magazine has begun accepting advertising, I fear that two more of *Emigre*'s unique features will disappear. It is hard to do a really coherent design when you must leave holes for ads. And advertising will have a pernicious effect on editorial content — even the brave writers at *Emigre* may fear to offend their sponsors. I fear that your magazine will become a less glossy version of such content-free publications as *Print* and *Communication Arts*. All that I am certain will remain is the unique *Emigre* typography. For me, that alone is enough to request a continued subscription (plus the fact that I already paid for most of it before you made this change). But it would be sad to see your once trend-setting magazine reduced to a showcase of fonts — a hip version of *U&Ic*.

I hope my fears are groundless, and that you will create something as new and as different as the old *Emigre*. I wish you success, but doubt that you will succeed. If there is anything I can do to help, I would be honored.

Sincerely,

Cliff Questel, Internet

THE READERS RESPOND section is set in Base Monospace Wide Bold 7.5/10 point. Running Headlines are set in Base Monospace Wide Bold 12 point. Lead ins and folios were set in Monospace Wide Bold 10/10 point. Sign offs are set in Monospace Wide Regular 6/10 point. Dear Emigres are set in letterspaced Base Monospace Wide Bold Italic 6/10 point.



Stencilled Ornament & Illustration (Shown above)

A demonstration of William Addison Dwiggins's Method of Book Decoration and Other Uses of the Stencil

Compiled and Arranged by Dorothy Abbe

This rare book, which was originally planned for publication in the early fifties under the imprint Puterschein-Wingham by Dwiggins and Abbe, was finally produced and published by the Trustees of the Boston Public Library in 1980. Only about 100 copies are available for sale.

74 pages, 6.75 x 10 inches, softcover, black and white, fully illustrated.

Offset printed. Hand set in Winchester Roman, an experimental linotype face designed by Dwiggins.

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Looking Closer 2: Critical Writings on Graphic Design (Shown above, sort of)

Edited by Michael Bierut, William Drenttel, Steven Heller & DK Holland

Published by Allworth Press. Co-published with the American Institute of Graphic Arts. Looking Closer 2 addresses the issues that have sparked discourse and discord over the past two years. And like the first, the second volume serves as an ad hoc textbook of graphic design criticism.

Featuring commentaries, manifestoes, reviews, editorials, and reportage by, among others, Robin Kinross, Tibor Kalman, Ellen Lupton, Katherine McCoy, Véronique Vienne, Zuzana Licko, Rick Poynor, J. Abbott Miller, Paul Seffo, Jan Wozencroft, Ellen Shapiro and Andrew Blauvelt.

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By Jessica Helfand

Published by William Drenttel New York

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Perfect bound in paper wrappers, 72 pages, 7 x 4.5 inches.

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Lift and Separate: Graphic Design and the Quote Unquote Vernacular

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THE "PROFESSIONALIZATION"

OF AMERICAN

GRAPHIC DESIGN



by Mr. Keedy

THE ROLE that commerce has played in American graphic design, and how it has determined what is valued in design practice, is one of the most interesting and least discussed topics. Questions of an ethical nature seldom arise in design discourse because designers are used to deferring responsibility to their clients, who are ultimately accountable for what is produced.

Designers are for the most part subordinate to the client, obedient to society, and patronizing to each other. The ethics of design are largely informed by a simplistic "politically correct" morality on one hand and a "bottom line" efficiency on the other, making for an easy value system for practice. It's a value system in which design is implicitly understood as a benign service, in which it is the designer's responsibility to anticipate and satisfy the expectations of the client and audience.

THE PROBLEM with this arrangement is that the audience is for the most part a silent, indifferent, and undifferentiated entity, thus necessitating a surrogate (usually self-appointed) "expert" to become the spokesperson for the audience. This surrogate audience expert is usually the client, or worse, a marketing consultant hired by the client. This eliminates the possibility of the audience's desires contradicting the client's goals. On the other hand, the graphic designer as representative of the audience is just as likely to act with a fair dose of self interest. Neither the client armed with a team of marketing experts, nor the designer with the best of intentions, is a credible representative of the audience.

BUT WHAT IS THE ALTERNATIVE? The designer's and client's confidence that "we know what's best for you" is based on the fact that they do know and care a lot more about design than the audience does. The fact that the audience is often unwilling to concede this point is proof of the ignorance and contempt they have for any specialized knowledge and expertise in design. Perhaps that's why designers don't use the word "audience" very much anymore; now they call them "users." The term "user" is recognition of the fact that design and designers are supposed to be used up by the users.

JUST SHOW ME

GREASING THE WHEELS OF CAPITALISM WITH STYLE AND TASTE OR THE "PROFESSIONALIZATION" OF AMERICAN GRAPHIC DESIGN

THE MONEY

1!

IN SPITE OF the general indifference most people have toward design, designers are hardly indifferent toward their users; in fact, they can't get enough of them. Who would have guessed that post-industrial capitalism would lead to so much selfless service to others' desires? But the "others," that designers are now so eager to please are not just some others, or most others; now we want to please all the others. Because nowadays, it often seems there is no point in recording music, making a movie, or publishing a book without the guarantee of a huge audience, or maximum usability.

MOTIVATED BY GREED AND LAZINESS, this crowd-pleasing attitude has infected design. Now exposure has become more important than what's being exposed. The number of hits your web site gets, the number of fonts you sell, the number of design awards and magazine articles you can rack up, and how big your clients are, are what designers value most. Now bigger is better, particularly in regard to clients and users. Getting more users means getting younger users. Just like music, film, clothing, and tobacco companies, now design companies are aiming lower for higher returns. It is without any sense of irony that designers now consider clients like Nike, Burton, and MTV the most desirable. AIGA design annuals that were once filled with great books, exhibition designs, and public signage systems, now look more like sporting good catalogs for preteens.

JUST BECAUSE pop culture is ruled by adolescent taste, does that mean design culture has to follow the money? Since a designer's clients can never be too big, nor their audience too young, it would be logical to conclude that the really important design work of the future will be done for baby food and diapers, and the most desirable clients will be Gerber and Playskool.

IN DESIGN CIRCLES you often hear designers use the expression "selling out," but what does that mean in a practice in which the selling always precedes the production? And what exactly is being sold out? The designer's integrity and standards? What are those based on? Is design that doesn't attempt to make money somehow better than that which does? There has certainly never been a shortage of really crappy free design. The designer who believes that "selling out" is somehow easier than sticking to presumably higher principles has obviously never really sold out. Selling out is as much work and probably more aggravating than abiding by one's own self-fulfilling principles.

WHEN IT COMES TO the relationship between design and money, no one-to-one equation of value survives. Except maybe for the one that states: the bigger jerk the client is, the higher the charge. Or from the client's perspective: the bigger jerk the designer is, the higher the fee. But why would a client spend more money to work with a bigger jerk? It's like psychotherapy; if you don't pay for it, it doesn't work — no pain, no gain. "Just look at this fancy office, and all those employees and design awards, it's got to be worth the price. Right?"

ECLECTICISM AND

GREASING THE WHEELS OF CAPITALISM WITH STYLE AND TASTE OR THE "PROFESSIONALIZATION" OF AMERICAN GRAPHIC DESIGN

MODERNISM

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IN THE EARLY DAYS, the commercial artist's aesthetic ideology was formed largely by the demands of the market place — whatever sold the best and was cost effective and expedient. That market-driven aesthetic was slightly tempered by the designer's personal experience that varied from print shops, sign painting, copy writing, and illustration. The aesthetic ideology of the commercial artist was a vernacular hodgepodge that had no preference for either high or low cultural style. Good or bad was only a matter of how well something was done. The only thing that was deemed unethical was to do amateurish and inept work for professional wages. Well crafted, or slickly

produced work, was highly regarded no matter whom it was for. It would be a gross generalization to say that the situation is exactly the opposite now, but things are certainly a lot more complicated today.

NOT ONLY was the commercial artist's approach to style iconoclastic, but their relationship to commerce was equally individualized. Not regarded as professionals, it was up to each individual to establish their own place between art and commerce. This democratic approach to style and practice, typical of the unschooled commercial artist, is now generally referred to as "eclectic" in the design community. The ethical standards of the eclectic designer were equally eclectic in that they varied according to whom the designer worked for — it was every man for himself (since they were mostly all men). They tended to be independent designers working on smaller scale projects and they were often close acquaintances of their clients.

BECAUSE THERE WAS NO prevailing aesthetic or ethical ideology, American designers were receptive to new ideas. The consumer-based economy was also receptive to new ideas, as long as they could be commodified, or added value to existing products. That was the fertile American soil that the seeds of modernism, blown from across the Atlantic ocean, were to root in. And that was also the beginning of the decline of American eclecticism in design.

TODAY, American graphic design is generally thought of as consisting of two basic currents of practice: eclecticism and modernism. The eclectic designer is a descendant of the commercial artist who learned on the job or in a trade school. The eclectic's work runs the gamut of stylistic vernaculars from classicism to contemporary. But today, the most pervasive model of practice is the modern professional designer, whose work is based on the ideas of European emigres who were educated by artists in art schools. The modernist designer's work is defined by the designer's understanding and interpretation of modernism.

THESE TWO CURRENTS OF IDEOLOGY, eclecticism and modernism, have been widely accepted as the basic paradigm for the development of graphic design in America. The old eclectic and the new modern serve as a kind of historical continuum that concludes with the triumph of corporate modernism. However, the past decade has added a new third paradigm: post-modernism, a reaction to, or, as some would say, a confused disillusionment with, the first two.

SINCE MOST DESIGNERS today are college-educated and have at least a rudimentary understanding of design history, the eclectic approach to design today is mostly an affectation of willful ignorance. Although greater claims are sometimes made by the designers, the overall effect of today's eclectic designer is mostly one of nostalgia and kitsch. Which is, as such, a very lucrative style. It is a lot easier to sell your clients on something familiar than to convince them to take a chance with something new. Although pandering to the tastes of the lowest common denominator is eclecticism's greatest commercial asset, it has also become the greatest aesthetic and conceptual liability, the American designer's albatross. There is something inherently cynical about exhibiting a naivete that is not genuine, but as the saying goes, "No one ever went broke underestimating the taste of the American public."

THE DIFFERENCE between the new eclecticism and the old is that the new eclectic designer has higher production values (due to new technology), and the old eclectic designer had better craftsmanship and formal skills (also due to new technology). Today eclecticism in design is viewed as the flip side of modernism; it is that catch-all phrase for everything outside of modernism's majestic reach. The main function of eclecticism is to be everything but modern; it is the pre-modern as opposed to the postmodern. Little is known about the old eclectic designers; they are not considered important or interesting enough to warrant study. The commercial artists

were supposed to be anonymous, while modernist designers are always autonomous. The old eclectic designers of America's past are a cipher on which we project everything we think we have lost, and everything we think we might like to lose.

WINNERS

GREASING THE WHEELS OF CAPITALISM WITH STYLE AND TASTE OR THE "PROFESSIONALIZATION" OF AMERICAN GRAPHIC DESIGN

AND

LOSERS

3

IN *A HISTORY OF GRAPHIC DESIGN*,¹ the *de facto* textbook for design history in America, William Addison Dwiggins, one of the most important American graphic designers, barely rated one paragraph in the Arts and Crafts chapter, with absolutely none of his work reproduced. In the most recent edition, he has been upgraded with an additional four sentences in The Modern Movement in America chapter, which lists three of his typefaces, reproduces a title page he designed, and identifies him as a "transitional" designer.

BY CONTRAST, Herbert Bayer fills four pages (two in the second edition) with numerous reproductions of his work and all of his experimental alphabets reproduced. All this despite the fact that Bayer's typefaces were never used much, were not as influential to type design as Dwiggins's, and he was less prolific. However, Bayer's work is obviously considered substantially more important to the development of graphic design than Dwiggins's. Why? Because even though Dwiggins was a modern designer with modern values, he wasn't a modernist designer like those "Bauhaus boys" he used to make fun of, so he is relegated to oblivion. Obviously, when you do a history book, you can't include everyone and everything. Oz Cooper, for example, doesn't even warrant a mention. History is written by and for the winners. But how did designers as talented and important as Dwiggins and Cooper get to be the losers?

DESIGNERS LIKE DWIGGINS and Cooper were every bit as talented and arguably more innovative and original in their work than their canonized modernist counterparts. Although their design was based on the values of craftsmanship and tradition, they were committed to producing new work for the Machine Age. Their work was idiosyncratic because it was shaped by the force of their personal convictions. Perhaps they lost out because these "bumpkins from the Midwest" were difficult to categorize and were usually lumped together under the generic heading of eclecticism.

HOWEVER, the real reason the eclectics were the losers in design history isn't just because they were ideologically diverse and more difficult to assimilate (copy); it also has to do with their values or why and who they were working for. Although Dwiggins wrote one of the first good how-to books on design, *Layout in Advertising* (1929), he was very skeptical of advertising. So when he learned that he had diabetes, he decided to drop advertising work for good. "I am a happy invalid and it has revolutionized my whole attack. My back is turned on the more banal kind of advertising, and I have canceled all commissions and am resolutely set on starving. I shall undertake only the simple childish little things that call for compromise with the universal twelve-year-old mind of the purchasing public and I will produce art on paper and wood after my own heart with no heed to any market. Revolution, stark and brutal."²

DWIGGINS ALSO wrote rather critical essays about the poor quality of books, badly designed typefaces, and a satirical spoof of systematic theoretical approaches to design. He designed typefaces that were highly speculative and unique, and many considered his use of color bizarre. Dwiggins, perhaps one of the most underrated graphic designers of the twentieth century, represents an alternative model for design practice to that of all the overrated corporate tools, whose financial and self-promotional success have eclipsed all other concerns.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

4 CORPORATE AND OBLIVION

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THE OLD ECLECTIC DESIGNERS were so absorbed in their work that they didn't bother sucking up to big business and they weren't afraid to bite the hand that fed them if the integrity of their design was at stake. Hardly the kind of calculated crowd-pleasing gestures typical of designers today - it's no wonder they are considered a bunch of losers.

UNLIKE THE LOCAL YOKELS, the debonair emigres from Europe marched in the ideological lock-step of modernism. Compared to the home-grown aesthetic that evolved in a piecemeal fashion from the American "eclectics," the modernist ideology was much easier to grasp. You didn't need to know any history and you could get it in a few choice sound bites. The designers who were in the know knew that "less is more" and "form follows function," so that "the more uninteresting the letter, the more useful it is to the typographer," to create "the new typography." Wasn't that easy? Now just put on some black clothes, cop an attitude, and you're a modernist designer.

THE MODERNIST IDEOLOGY was perfect for schools because it was formulated in schools. Now all the new design programs that started springing up to meet the increasing demands of the market place had clear guidelines and an easy list of do's and don'ts to follow. They weren't overburdened with too much conflicting history; it all started with the Bauhaus and ended with Paul Rand.

IN STARK CONTRAST to the old eclectic designer, the modernist designer worked on large scale projects in big studios for big corporations making big profits. Clearly they were the big winners. However, even though the modernists were cloaked in their own pseudo-scientific visual language, it was obvious to the outdated old eclectics that the new emperors would eventually be left out in the cold, in their underpants.

MODERNISM

GREASING THE WHEELS OF CAPITALISM WITH STYLE AND TASTE OR THE "PROFESSIONALIZATION" OF AMERICAN GRAPHIC DESIGN

"but, above all, I want to be aware that art and business must converge and co-operate in the new visual experience towards total integration."

- herbert bayer, *magazine of art*, 18, 1951

THE NEW MODERNIST EMIGRES from Europe were not interested in improving and developing American design traditions; they wanted to put an end to the past and start over as the patriarchs of their own domain. But they couldn't build this brave new world alone, because basically they were just a bunch of starving artists with an attitude. What they needed was cash. Fortunately for them, the emerging corporate culture in America would provide cash in exchange for a look of respectability and sophistication - so it would look like they deserved the money they were making. Thus began the tawdry affair that presumably legitimized and professionalized the design trade in America.

THE POPULAR MASS MARKET acceptance of anything is always contingent on its ability to be easily assimilated. The more useful and desirable something is, the better it will sell. American designers bought modernism from Europe lock, stock, and barrel, and re-sold it to American corporations for a quick profit. Starting in 1951, all the way to the present, the Aspen International Design Conference's primary objective has been to sell modern design to corporate America by celebrating the success of corporate design, a theme that was to preoccupy most American design organizations for the next forty years.

THE ASPEN DESIGN CONFERENCE set the stage for the successful design stars of the competitive, money grubbing, golden years of the 80s, when corporate design was at its zenith. As an idealistic young designer at the time, the corporate design stars who I was supposed to emulate looked like a bunch of hustlers, tripping over each other to kiss corporate America's ass, hoping

for a few farts of fortune and fame. In hindsight, I have more empathy for what some of them were doing, but not much respect.

IS IT ANY WONDER designers starting out today are trying to make it on their own and define design practice on their own terms? We can only hope they make more progress in establishing design as a meaningful endeavor for the next generation instead of just grabbing as much of the American pie as they can stuff in their mouth. However, if the next generation only does its own thing, it will ultimately be even more short-sighted than the last. Design will be defined as anything and everything, and will ultimately amount to nothing.

BY CONSTANTLY PROMOTING the utility and the ubiquity of design, designers have unwittingly decreased their cultural cache. The average person has more respect and admiration for someone who can decorate a pair of boxer shorts than they do for a designer who can make the mass transit system of a big city intelligible and appealing. The more convincing the case that designers make for themselves, the more invisible they become. Once corporate America had modernism, what did it need designers for?

THIS IS ACTUALLY a very old problem, one that designers may never reconcile because the marginalization of design has been an essential component in the advancement of western culture. In the beginning, everyone was a designer because everything was designed or made by hand. Later, in the Middle Ages, the "specialists in making things" gained rank and were called "artisans." With increased urbanization and technological advancements, the artisans diversified and regulated their work through Medieval guilds, which instigated commerce or trade with others, then "The Renaissance introduced an intellectual separation of practical craft and fine art. Art came to be held in higher esteem. The transition took a long time, but slowly the word 'artisan' was coopted to distinguish the skilled manual worker from the intellectual, imaginative, or creative artist, and artists emerged as a very special category of cultural workers, producing a rare marginal commodity: works of art. Meanwhile artisans often organized their labors to the point where their workshops became factory-like."³

BY THE TIME the Industrial Revolution started, the subservient rank and diminished value of low end cultural workers, (i.e. designers) was firmly inscribed in the culture. Today, the use of the word "designer," as in "designer jeans," often designates something superficial and of dubious merit, while the use of the word "art" or "artist" always connotes high quality and prestige.

THIS CULTURAL LEGACY, combined with the designer's own aggressive boosterism, has led corporate America to view design as a cheap, endlessly renewable, natural resource. If you think that is an exaggeration, then ask yourself, "What has corporate America done to sustain and develop its design resources?" Corporate support of design usually amounts to little more than thinly veiled recruitment and self-promotion efforts, like awards given for the best use of their products, or the sponsorship of creative solutions to problems they can capitalize on.

ONE NOTABLE EXCEPTION is the Chrysler Award for Design Innovation, now in its fifth year of celebrating innovation in design. But what about other corporations that rely on design for their continued success? Most corporations spend millions in support of the fine arts, not the design arts. After all, if the creator or designer is invisible, then nothing stands between the continuous feed loop between the consumer and the company; it's just you and it. "Just do. . ." "Just be. . ." it.

FOR ALL THE HARD WORK designers have invested in making crappy products and stupid ideas look interesting, they have been repaid by being marginalized into oblivion. "And everything that is designed will melt into air." I wish

I could remove every bit of graphic design from the planet for a couple of hours. Great ideas would still be communicated, but the sensibilities that connect us to them, and make them real, would be gone.

INDEPENDENT

GREASING THE WHEELS OF CAPITALISM WITH STYLE AND TASTE OR THE "PROFESSIONALIZATION" OF AMERICAN GRAPHIC DESIGN VALUES

5

MONEY AND STATUS are inextricably linked — nothing elevates one's status as quickly and effectively as money; unless of course, you happen to be a designer. As commercial artists, designers are presumably "in it for the money" anyway, and as skilled manual workers they are held in lower esteem than the fine artist. So designers will never elevate their cultural status no matter how much money they make. And the monetary worth of design will always be low in accordance to its perceived cultural value. Designers will always be damned for being commercial when they make money, and failures when they don't. It will be a long time before this cultural bias changes, if ever.

WHEN IT COMES TO INFLUENCE, contribution, success, and recognition in the cultural arena, or the commercial world, designers are screwed. Like Rodney Dangerfield, "they don't get no respect." Instead of banging our heads against a cultural and commercial glass ceiling, perhaps it's time to look elsewhere for acknowledgment. Maybe designers should stop looking for public adoration and start working on mutual respect.

UP TO THIS POINT, I have discussed design as a primarily passive and reactive service — reacting to clients, the economy, and pop culture. Earlier, I asked if design culture must always follow pop culture, and I think the answer is "yes." Because of the ephemeral nature of graphic design, it will always be linked to pop culture. That, in no way, implies that design can't develop a culture of its own; a proactive design culture that determines its own values in its own best interest. If design is defined as a generative proactive activity, instead of a secondary reactive service, the arbiter of value is the individual creator, not the user. As such, the creator is responsible for developing and assessing values that are consistent with the best ideals of their time. But this may be more responsibility than most designers are willing to accept, particularly in light of the fact that designers have historically deferred credit and responsibility to their clients.

IS IT WRONG for designers to determine for themselves what constitutes quality work outside of economic realities? Or to set standards that exceed the expectations of the pragmatic ephemeral realities of day-to-day practice? Is it a waste of time to transcend imagined possibilities and continuously rewrite history as an endless source of inspiration? Is there nothing to gain from being reflective and critical of our theories and practices? If we have no conception of excellence without compromise, then how do we know when we are getting closer to excellence?

FALLING SHORT OF EXCELLENCE is not failure; not trying for it is. Designers' values today have been eroded by a commercialized pop-culture simulation of success that is too easily obtained. Does it really matter how many clients, design awards, web site hits, fonts, faxes, Ferraris, or fish, a designer has accumulated? At the end of the day, and the end of your career, all that really matters is your body of work, your intellectual and aesthetic contribution, your skill, craftsmanship, and humanity.

1 Philip B. Meggs, *A History of Graphic Design*, Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1983, second edition 1992

2. W. A. Dwiggins, W. A. Dwiggins to Carl P. Rollins, *Rollins Papers*, June 6, 1923

3. Malcolm McCullough, *Abstracting Craft, The Practiced Digital Hand*, MIT Press, 1966

"I AM A HAPPY INVALID AND IT HAS REVOLUTIONIZED MY WHOLE ATTACK. MY BACK IS TURNED ON THE MORE BANAL KIND OF ADVERTISING, AND I HAVE CANCELED ALL COMMISSIONS AND AM RESOLUTELY SET ON STARVING. I SHALL UNDERTAKE ONLY THE SIMPLE CHILDISH LITTLE THINGS THAT CALL FOR COMPROMISE WITH THE UNIVERSAL TWELVE-YEAR-OLD MIND OF THE PURCHASING PUBLIC AND I WILL PRODUCE ART ON PAPER AND WOOD AFTER MY OWN HEART WITH NO HEED TO ANY MARKET. REVOLUTION, STARK AND BRUTAL." – W.A.DWIGGINS

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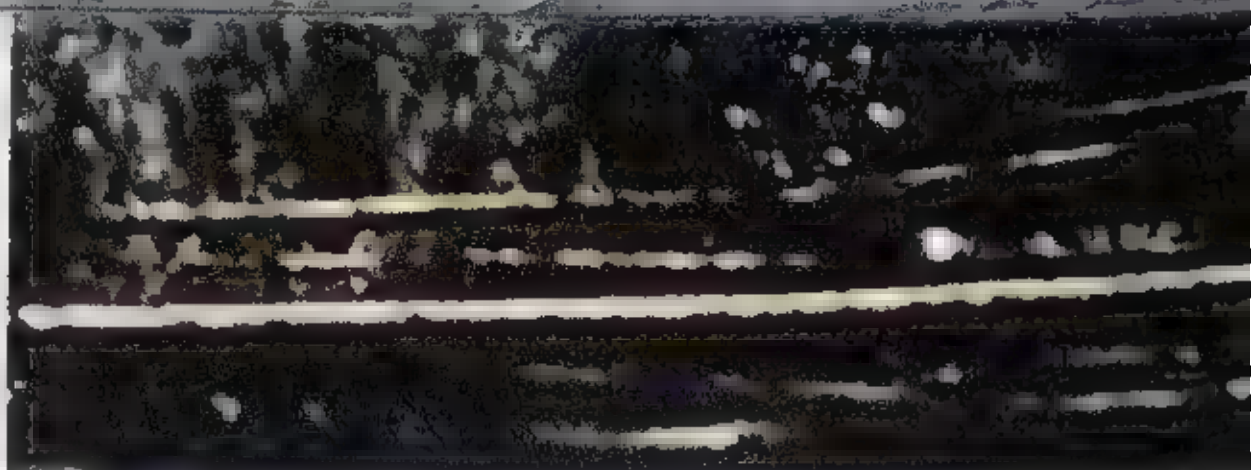


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Фотографии

Александра Родченко

1952-53



OUT OF CONTEXT: DESIGNISTS ENTREPRENEURS AND OTHER UTOPIANS

I found at my doorstep a box filled with magazines, of a sort, originating from around the world. They are as concrete as my porch where they've gathered, yet they are clearly mobile, having traveled such far distances to arrive here in Los Angeles. I lift out the bundles of ephemera. Images refract through layers of bubble wrap and tape upon tape. They must be fragile, or unstable. Or both. I unveil the thin volumes and begin sifting through them—a guilty pleasure, I admit, what with all that information waiting to be interacted with on the Web. I finally settle on a large format magazine, center it in the space I've cleared on the table before me. It looks like a tall doorway leading elsewhere.

The magazine is *Da!*. Bold red and white stripes fill half of the cover while Russian phrases skitter over and around them. I can't decide if the exuberant black scribble punctuating the page is a tracing of some hapless galactic route or a photogram of an unruly mass of string. Either way, some material memory is there transmitting its code. I open the cover carefully—not wanting to jostle a possible universe—to a vast space bursting with what appear to be snapshots. A brief description in English at the back of the magazine explains that they are experimental color photographs by the artist Alexander Rodchenko, shot in the early fifties but published in *Da!* for the first time.

Thirty years earlier, Rodchenko had labeled himself a Constructivist, a Productivist, an Advertising Constructor. His painting, photography and typography were to be “linked with production in an organized way.” He advocated applying the artist's eye—and the Russian avant garde aesthetic of rational, geometric, red-and-black forms—to everyday, high-use objects such as cigarette and candy packaging, government agency posters, clothing. Oh yes—and public journals.

I discover that an article about his wife, comrade Varvara Stepanova, concludes the same issue. It features a hand-made journal she constructed entitled *НАУКА И ЖИЗНЬ*. Painstakingly typewritten text is interwoven with pasted or hand-painted illustrations on a two column grid. The spreads manifest the principles of Constructivism in that the production technology, and the form it delivers, are statements—about the future, about art and function. But then, my Russian is rusty.

Stepanova was a weaver and a book designer who announced the shift from “artistic activity” to “intellectual production.”¹ Rodchenko crafted metal and painted. And he was a photographer who exploited what he saw as the camera's capacity to isolate the abstract properties of familiar objects and to represent reality, unfiltered. Rodchenko and Stepanova were image makers—or rather image constructors—of a visible ideal. Both wrote. Their Constructivist mandate attempted to reposition the social role of the artist, from spiritual visualizer to inventor and advocate of a formally articulated, production-based utopia.

I see Rodchenko and Stepanova as progenitors of what might be called “designists.” Designists are creative communicators who see text, typography, and image as social mediums. Designists figure that a cultural-slash-design dialogue includes their visual and textual voices. They determine content, or they might collaborate with other designists, students, writers, publishers to create content. Sometimes their ideas are rooted in theoretical issues or political concerns, sometimes in visual exploration. A bit like Constructivists, designists tend to work within “an ideology, not an artistic movement.”² Or maybe some don't. I really have no way of knowing. Whatever their motivation, designists give visual form to their own ideas. Often they disseminate those ideas, seek out an audience or a market. Designists seem to know that

1. from “The General Theory of Constructivism,” a lecture delivered at Inzhuk on December 22, 1921. 2. *ibid*

DESIGNED-SLASH-WITTEN BY
DENISE GONZALES CRISP

and varied spaces that will

as dancefloors.

appreciable, knowable by its boundaries, or what forms its extremities, they may be near or far, be walls, ceilings, floors or other people, they may be stone, concrete, metal, or light, smoke and music. If

no apparent boundaries the space appears infinite; any one dancefloor is just one slice of

infinite dancefloor.

inment. of enclosure and of being under something very large and very heavy, intensifies the sense of the club as a cabalistic which a greater sense of freedom and self expression can occur

hine space

point from which it is possible to see the whole club, it is open ended, there is always the possibility of something interesting around the corner. To truly appreciate this it is necessary to forget old parts of the club as you learn new parts by inducing

above the packed dancefloor, an absence of claustrophobia, people separated by vertical and horizontal distance can view a performance

No boundaries apparent

there is no sense of beginning and end



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"...the cutting edge is blunt: the sleek digital infrastructure dreamed of by the technocracy is not yet in effect, and things could still go horribly wrong. In trying to surf the loopholes and stay ahead of the distribution game, the freedom fighters of creative subculture are out-maneuvering the machines themselves. meanwhile, the conglomerates lag behind..." excerpt from '@virtuafighters', CODE #3

DESIGNER SLASH WRITER | DIRECTOR SLASH ACTOR | OBSTETRICIAN SLASH PEDIATRICIAN | JOURNALIST SLASH SUPERHERO | MUSICIAN SLASH COMPOSER | HAIR SLASH NAILS | DANCER SLASH CHOREOGRAPHER

**WE ARE CREATORS.
WE ARE NOT IMITATORS.
WE ARE THE REAL.**

LIVE ALIVE IDEAS TAKE FORM, FORM CONTROLS THE PAGE FIXES THINGS.

CONCRETE AND INK

SPEAK A UNIQUE TONGUE TO OUR OWN AND TO THOSE WHO WILL SEE.

**WE WILL REMAIN DISTINCT.
A TRIBE.**

WE ARE DUBLIN'S TECHNOKINDER

EXISTING IN THE FOURTH DIMENSION.

WE TRAVEL THE EARTH IN ORANGE SPACESUITS AND SPRAY CAN SILVER BOOTS.

**PREPARE TO DEPART SOLID EARTH AT THE FLASH OF A NOVA.
SPACE IS TRANSMUTABLE.**

CONQUER IT DAILY.

EVOLVE INTO TIME-BASED LIFE FORMS.

THE ITINERANT DANCE FLOOR MATERIALIZES, AND DEMATERIALIZES.

SPACE IS IMMATERIAL AND DESPERATE.

WE ARE THERE, AND THERE WE ARE SIMULTANEOUSLY IN CYBERLAND YET.

**WE ARE SOLID HERE, AND IN ANOTHER MOMENT SOLID THERE.
NOW IS THE REAL.**

THE PAGE IS THE NOW.

CODE IS OUR SPACE CONQUERED.

OUR MATERIAL.

CONSUME, CONTEMPLATE, ABSORB, BELIEVE.

CODE IS OUR TOTEM.

MICRO CULTURES REQUIRE RITUALIZED PRESENCE. PUBLISHING CAN FULFILL THE NEED. IN CODE, ADVERTS SELLING CLOTHING, CD'S AND CLUB EVENTS MELD SEAMLESSLY WITH EDITORIAL BITS ON FASHION, MUSIC, CLUB CULTURE. ABSOLUTE ALIGNMENT, WITH A TECHNO-HOUSE MUSIC FOCUS. MELLOW-TRIPPING-OUT. BUZZING-CYBER-SPEEDING. DIFFERENT GROOVES INSPIRE DIFFERENT MOVES. With this comes an almost dogmatic pressure to express oneself in the moment. To choose a groove at all seems overwhelming these days. To then emote seems impossible. I imagine publishing a magazine is like that: choosing a groove, filling a space. Some designers find this activity compelling. It offers the vague promise of expression, so they can



have brunch with one of my fellow

design alumni pals—Sibylle, a German speaking Swiss. I pull out issues 4, 5, 6 and 7 of a German journal to show **MUTABOR** is written and designed by students of the art and design program at Muthesiushöhschule, Kiel, published for and through the school. She is impressed with the large 22x38.5 cm. format and the production quality, as I was when I first saw them. A couple of the issues are foil-stamped or letterpressed in parts. Others contrast coveted white space with grainy duotones and xerography, or webs of precision rules, soft blurs and techno-inspired type. The set of four together, we both agree, is just plain luscious.

HER EYES GET REALLY BIG WHEN I PRESENT ISSUE #7. "Ooh!" she says, gingerly accepting the thing as if it were a brocade pillow supporting a crown of platinum. Two impeccably printed colors—one a silvery blue metallic ink—flood a clothweave cover stock: Retro-polyester-disco made desirable. Not only that, its 60 pages are wire-o bound. **Z o w - w e e .**

Normally we aren't easily seduced by such splendor. We are visual sophisticates, after all, having graduated with graphic design master's degrees. Even before that we were real-life, half-jaded designers; she in Zurich, I in L. A. While we were students we designed and silk-screened a few art lecture posters, but we didn't have the likes of **MUTABOR** to write, design and produce. Of course, we don't say any of this as we leaf through the magazine. We just sit there with our pancakes and coffee getting cold, wondering how we might find funding for such a project. In point of fact, we were suffering from a mild case of design envy.

WE GUESS THE SCHOOL HAS ACRES OF MONEY BECAUSE, to produce such an object as this "forum für kunst und gestaltung," the one thing you need is serious cash, or connections. Both are there for **MUTABOR**, as it turns out. It is sponsored by several companies: one is a digital pre-press/litho house, one a bank, another a paper manufacturer and distributor. So the students write and design the project and it is produced with corporate money. We conclude that the students are being misled as to what they can expect to be doing once outside of the academy.

SURE. THEY ARE PREPARED FOR A STABLE PROFESSION.

Undergraduate degrees in hand, they will jump from the graduation platform—scrubbed and bundled in fine blankets—into junior designer or art director jobs. And they will be happy. When you are new to a world, everything hums with promise. Sibylle and I toast them with our mimosas. We also pause to eulogize their design hankerings that once were so amply indulged at school. What will become of their commentaries, all that personality-infested stuff, we wonder? Will their role as "content provider" and design-slash-writer be replaced with sometimes dull client demands and daily designer-type decisions? Frankly, yes.

THEY MAY DISCOVER THAT HAVING A BIG BUDGET, PLUS CONTROL OVER THE CONTENT is a rare combination. They may think it necessary to sell their belongings in order to fund designist projects. If unable to do so, they could grow weary of being regular designers. Some will wish they could get back to what they did. "But who has that kind of money?" Sibylle raises her fork to reinforce her point. "Money's only one issue," I interject, "What of the fact that you can count on one hand the things graphic designers make."

Costume designers can aspire to become the name on a label, with some good backing—offer their own brand of flourish on the runway. Likewise, interior designers can develop lines of sofas or lamps or cutlery or lots of things. Such service-professionals-cum-originators are designists. They invent often expensive, sometimes challenging, **OBJET D'ART**. What is it, then, that graphic designers bring to this pricey party? Tatoo logos, perhaps, marketed to the angst-ridden elite? Contemporary posters to sell at Z Gallery? Or what about personal brochures...uhm...packaging for... "o h d e a r !"

SOMEHOW, THEY FIGURE OUT THINGS TO DO AND MAKE, though they can't do any one thing all the time. They may have one foot dancing the academic frug while the other one taps around like a divining rod seeking a commercial wellspring. As I demonstrate what that looks like to Sibylle, the waiter arrives with our check, laughing. Attempts to explain designists often get such responses. But try to draw a sensible picture of one who is half designer, half artist, half writer, half theorist and half salesman without getting a cynical grin. Say that their work delivers neither art nor design as defined by the discourse of each; that their writing or theories may not fit neatly into literary criteria; that a lot of what they make is "flawed." See where it gets you. But don't weep. Designists don't seem terribly upset about their schizophrenic, sometimes orphaned existence. They continue to make stuff: publications when they can afford it, street posters, quick-time movies, typefaces nobody buys. Then they dare to send it out, into the vast

이후 시작되는 원도 활자 시대와

이후 시작되는 원도 활자 시대와
비밀로써의 활자, 정립된
한글의 기원

1. 술 대신 활자제 원도의 색서가 필요
있었다. 이는 제식과 설비가 불리되었
을하는 것이며, 서적원 원도를 가지고
12월 4일 활자 제식과 설비는 원도
1부, 활자제식 5부, 의복 1부, 1년
조각기 1인도, 화사 1대, 1500원대화
1대의 원도 활자 시대 조각이 되고
서적사장이 원도 설계, 인쇄, 화성, 화

은 이들이 활동하였다. 이들이 일본
시료본을 읽은 후 각 세 부서는 박성식
최정호의 경험담에서 화두를, 비
박성식에게 화두내어, 그리고 문석은
원드 설계에 고심하였다.

1. **인간관계의 원리**를 이해한다. 인간관계의 원리를 이해하고 이를 바탕으로 인간관계를 맺는다. 인간관계의 원리를 이해하고 이를 바탕으로 인간관계를 맺는다. 인간관계의 원리를 이해하고 이를 바탕으로 인간관계를 맺는다.

날 많은 사람들은 가장 사랑스디요. 부끄럼
이런 것만 이 생애나 있나.

오늘날 디지털 폰트 시대에 디자인을 하는 디자이너는 '부서'에서 '개인'으로 바뀌어 버린다는 사실을 인지하고 있어야 한다. 한때는 사랑하며 특별한 '작품'을 할지 세를 나누는 것은 '개인'에 대한 '최종'의 사

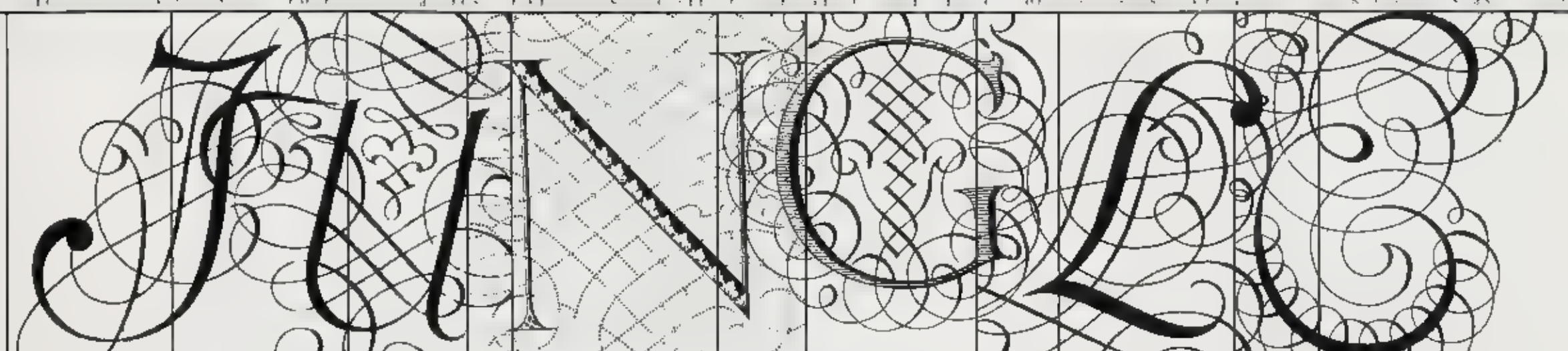
다음의 한 차원 높아진 바탕체가 기다려지고 있다

O

2015

서울여대 A. 각디사인학과 교수

[illegible]



MEANS PROPER TYPEFACE

IN KOREAN.

PROPER COULD MEAN SEVERAL THINGS:

APPROPRIATE, THAT IS,
TYPEFACES SUBJECT TO
INTERPRETATION WITHIN
A SET OF SHARED VALUES.

IT COULD MEAN CORRECT,
AS IN ADRIAN FRUTIGER,
EMIL RUDER AND YOU ARE
PRETTY TIGHT.

THEN, THERE IS PERSONAL,
A TYPEFACE BELONGING TO AN
INDIVIDUAL, AS ONE'S PROPER
NAME DOES, OR PROPERTY.

*Like Morison, Benton, Zapf and Carter,
Young-Ki Yoon is a traditional master
in the highly specialized arena of type design.
As President and founder of the Yoon Design Institute,
a "font development and design firm" located in Seoul,
he is an entrepreneur.
My Korean students tell me that he is
Korea's most famous type designer.
Evidently, until Mr. Yoon began contributing to the field,
the range of Korean-character typefaces
available was limited.*

*Mr. Yoon also publishes JUNGLE,
a beautifully designed journal that aims
"to provide the most advanced typography
news and information and to establish an ideal
typography culture in Korea."
Mr. Yoon carries on the serious typographic tradition
of researching, developing and producing
fine typefaces that expand the ways in which
a culture may communicate its history,
its issues and its ideals.
Mr. Yoon carries on the tradition of
the type designer.*

My esteemed friend Willem is a
type designer extraordinaire.
In his youth—right after the war—
he apprenticed in Belgium where
he learned his punches from his
matrices. In the sixties, when
rock stars were doing pilgrimages
to India, Willem traveled to Japan
where he lived for two years,
studying at the feet of a master
calligrapher. Now a veteran of the
black art, his current obsession is
a hybrid sans serif type family.
He's been working on it since
1989. It melds, and I quote,
"the geometry of Futura, the
clarity of Gill Sans and the
practicality of Univers." It looks
a bit like Bell Gothic to me. But
I'm a typo-philistine, or so Willem
informs me. He's right. Even
though I've studied type design
and used typefaces for years,
I'm a dilettante in such esoteric
matters. "Strictly table wine,"
Willem sneers

Mickey is going to start her
own foundry. Until now she's
kept her eye peeled looking
for the vanguard so she can be
the first to ride a new type
wave. But that takes so much
work. She has designed a few
typefaces in her time. Well,
really only one, but she knows
Fontographer and she knows a
few type designers who can
teach her the ropes. For years
she's been picking up their
typefaces, has been the first
to use them. But, she found
that before too long others
would discover the same
typeface. "Next thing you
know everybody's being sucked
along in the heady draught of
originality" she exclaims, "and
it gets damn crowded." She's
done with negotiating the
edge, clawing for an inch of
room, hacking back wanna-be
trend setters. She's going to
be a type designer. she's
decided she's going to own



NEW VISUAL

towards a

language

the edge of the skirt couldn't be past your thumbs when your arms were hanging straight down. Anything longer would have invited ridicule. Of course the entire free world was wearing mini-skirts at the time. Maybe that's who we were identifying with finally. Not just the groovy girls in fifth grade, but the entire world.

You weren't recognized by the clique unless you could fulfill certain expectations, and the potential for banishment was huge. One oversight and you could forget about swapping records for the rest of the year.

Avoiding disgrace wasn't easy. The rules for social acceptance were varied and changed frequently, making it difficult to keep up. Like the handwriting rules.

The handwriting rules went like this. First, you had to write straight up and down, not slanted like it shows in the book. This was an effort for Gretchen Schultz who was left handed. Gretchen didn't last long in the group.

"O's" had to be tall and narrow; the "i's" had to be dotted with open circles; stems of "y's" needed to loop in a very particular way, sort of wide and curly. If you could get them to consistently cross down to the exact top of the next line of letters, you were revered.

It was never clear where the rules came from. They would just be there, out of the blue. One rule emerged dictating that every line we wrote be centered. It was the most difficult of all our rules, and though we dedicated countless hours to mastering the skill, no one did. Especially me. I therefore made it my mission to seek—and if necessary destroy—the origins of this damnable rule.

One day in my search I noticed a hand written, mimeographed notice on the bulletin board. Each delicate line was perfectly centered. Now, preparing a mimeo master was an unforgiving task. The mimeograph lady confirmed this when she proudly named Janda Ong as the only kid she ever met who could center each line perfectly on the first try. She saved the school reams of mimeo master paper.

Janda Ong was a virtuoso, but she was also an outsider. I risked social exile by talking to her, a risk that would soon dissolve because I had every intention of punching her out. But as we talked, I began to realize that she ought to be the one to flatten me.

My gang, after all, was the one who took her unique centering skill for their own. To ease my guilty conscience I introduced Janda to the gang, and later she became one of us. But we never really acknowledged her influence. Unless, of course, you count every line we centered.

Thanks to the rigors of fifth grade social life, I now belong to a similar clique. Call it a design gang. I see the work of these gangs everywhere: student galleries, graduate portfolios, competitions. I see evidence of them in showcase books on design.

The exhibits "Lift and Separate" [New York 1993] and "And She Told Two Friends" [Chicago 1996] helped identify certain groups, if not imply consolidation. The recent "Mixing Messages" show [New York 1996-97]—in its attempt to cross territories and sensibilities—spoke from within the tenets of a group.

That's how we organize ourselves. And then our communities build little design utopias in their work. Little nowheres and elsewhere. While our utopias proclaim distinction from others, I know most seek a place in the supreme utopia: the free market.

I'm part of the clique that builds this utopia, too. And I spend a lot of time trying to figure out the rules. I've identified a few. One rule says what I make should be different, and another says what I make shouldn't stand out so much that I'm considered insane. The rules about conformity aren't really spelled out, but we members know when something's crazy and when something's worth \$20.

Another rule says I'm free to mine anything from anywhere to distinguish myself. I like this rule, and I see it in effect all the time: from Miller selling beer with a working class aesthetic to Nike selling shoes with urban ghetto stories. I don't even have to understand what I'm taking.

This last rule makes it tough on designers and illustrators like those who put together the collaborative publication I-Jusi. These South Africans isolated the craft of wood cuts—among other things—to fashion a unique visual voice. And with good reason. The designers are actually from South Africa!

But where have I seen these forms before?

Ah! In California surf culture stuff; as a university's anthropology department logo; on a blockbuster movie and on a pint of ice cream. The discrete identity this group has created for itself—and its little design utopia I-Jusi—has already been used to identify "in-corporated" groups.

I don't know. I suspect that I-Jusi and Kenya Koffee Krunch frozen yoghurt aren't anywhere near the same thing. I hope they're not. I'd like to think I'm able to appreciate I-Jusi's utopia. The problem is, it can be hard to tell the difference. Even as a member of a design gang that prides itself on its open-mindedness, I worry about

The advert exploits the occasion 'Amper'sand' is
essentially a magazine than a promotional leaflet.
design firm and typographer 'Amper'sand' engages and
entertains with stories, provocative questions and funny
imagery, hope to effectively stimulate dialogue about
design. Atria and elsewhere.

When something is left out in the sun, it fades.
Printed images fade very quickly.
The image is therefore being absorbed by the sun.
If we could look closely at the sun we would see
that its surface is covered in the printed images
that we lost on earth. And that perhaps these
images are what fuels the sun's rays

ANONYMOUS

Mute relation magazine 1989

THIS IS

"Countless microscopic mouths open and close, I've heard. They suck in wordforms and pictures through square lips, spit others out, but in between the pixels feast." He pauses dramatically to scan the circle, making sure he has everyone's attention. "We can't see the screen chewing—our eyes are too large, our minds too small. The process isn't a subtle, fading one. The screen gulps images down and they simply snap away. Perhaps they burst like grapes and dissolve into nothing."

Another counters in a hush. "I've heard it thus: The effect of the chewing on pictures and wordforms is imperceptible, happening through minute changes in the structure. Little by little, bite by bite, hundreds of tiny bits go missing, like the threads at the elbow of a sweater. Over time the forms lose their presence, their power is diluted until the images and wordforms are so weak they can no longer exist." She slumps forward feigning exhaustion, her face catching more of the glow emanating from their center.

"Well, I've heard...that if you hold your ear very close to the screen, you can hear the hum of five-hundred-seventy-five-thousand sets of teeth collectively masticating." They all hesitate at this thought. "Stop!" the youngest protests, breaking the silence, "You're creeping us out."

THE ELDEST THEN SPEAKS. "THESE TALES OF YOURS ARE SILLY. UNFOUNDED REACTIONS TO THE UNKNOWN... TALES OF FEAR."

"Fear, schmear, things disappear. Deny it."

"He's right. Everything goes, and what are we left with? What do we build on? Where is the place for wordforms and images?"

"THEY DO NOT DISAPPEAR. THE THIN PIXELS YOU REFER TO ARE CLEAR AND WHITE, FOR ALL THE MANY IMAGES AND WORDFORMS ARE LAYERED WITHIN THEM. IMAGE UPON IMAGE, WORDFORM UPON WORDFORM. THEY ARE NOT EATEN, THEY HAVE BEEN REFORMED, PURIFIED."

"What good is purity? We want to wallow."

"CURIOUS, BUT INTERESTING POINT. CAN YOU NOT WALLOW IN INTERFACE?"

"You always defer to Interface," retorts one girl. She crosses her two forefingers at their tips, then connects her thumb tips to form THE SIGN, a warped rectangle approximating the proportions of a screen. Staring straight into the glow, she quotes "And the future shall be built from threads of wire densely woven back and forth, to and fro, one into the other. The surface shall be as finely beaten bark cloth and shall be as our path." Everyone except the eldest applauds, congratulating her perfect recitation.

"YOU MOCK THE WISDOM OF INTERFACE, AND YET DO NOT TRULY KNOW IT. IT IS OUR WAY."

"It is Interface that mocks us!" another snaps, pointing to the fire. "Its cackle can be heard in the flames of these pages burning before us."

THE ELDEST CLOSES HIS EYES TO QUELL HIS GROWING IMPATIENCE. HE TAKES SEVERAL DEEP BREATHS, AND FINALLY RESPONDS CALMLY. "'THE PAGE SHALL KEEP YOU WARM...'" RECOGNIZING THE QUOTE, THE OTHERS TRY TO SILENCE HIM WITH LOUD, DERISIVE GROANS. HE CONTINUES HIS LITANY, UNDAUNTED, "...BUT THE CONSTANT GLOW OF INTERFACE SHALL KEEP YOU

exhaust

exhausted

agonised about
cried over
sleepless nites
bitched over
bad health
6^{am} workthruz
squeezed™
no social life
no time
designed
hyper-conceptualized
composed
produced
programmed
arranged
contacted
d@iven™
sweated over
loaded
detailed

sitting at the table with small stacks of magazines to my left and right, some protected by bubble wrap the way I found them. The stacks rustle slightly, announcing a wind that then gusts through the room and whips the loose magazines up in a flurry. As I scramble to retrieve them, they elude my grasp. Pages flap up and down sporadically like awkward flying machines. A clatter trails the unwieldy formation as it rushes out the door. I make it to the window in time to see them lose momentum above the street and drop resolutely to the asphalt.

I race out toward them, grabbing at stray pages along the way, and make it as far as the sidewalk when a shrill honk stops me abruptly. A silver sport-slash-utility vehicle screams through the heap, crushing most of it, sending a few pages to drift in the air. I stand with my hands to my head at the curb, at once amazed by the fantastic flight I just witnessed, and saddened by its sudden and unfortunate undoing.

Surveying the damage, I become despondent. The MUTABOR issues are scarred and twisted. The wire-o binding that once held #7 together is gnarled. Other magazines have lost their bulk for want of staples. I find myself hoping, in the way of a curse, that the staples and wire have punctured the tires of that big-ass car.

Who am I kidding. A bit of wire and a few staples are lint to those tires. Kneeling near the remains, I lament the lost research, writing, testing, playing and designing the magazines embodied. My only consolation is the thought that the authors and designers have moved on to new publications, objects, and sites by now. And there must be more copies around somewhere, most likely in the publisher's garage. But still. I want to know more about these designers. The last time I met

*My sincere thanks to the creators
of these publications*

DA! page 50
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Vladimir Krichko, skt
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CODE page 52
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MUTABOR page 54
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JUNGLE page 56
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I JUST page 58
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AMPERSAND page 60
PUBLISHER Letterbox
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DESIGNER Stephen Barham
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designed by Stephen Barham, and
Gregory Voithok
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Melbourne 3000 Australia
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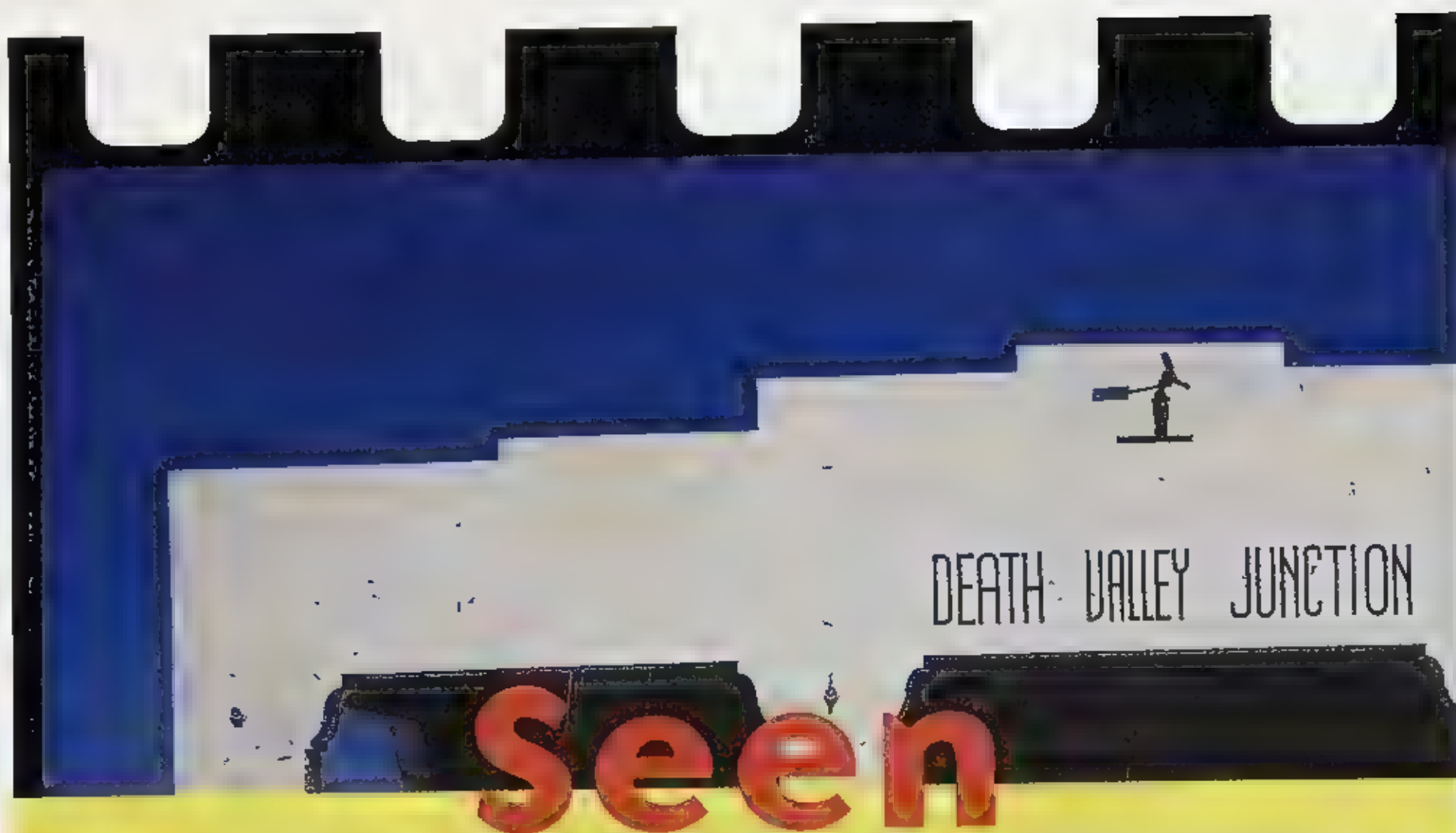
EX:HAUST page 62
PUBLISHER EDITOR DESIGNERS
Jim Cooper Steve Mendes
49 Cromwell Road Great Glen
Leicester LE8 9GL England

*Special thanks to R. dy and Zuzana
two dedicated designist slash
entrepreneurs who indulged their
interests to create a venue for other
utopians*

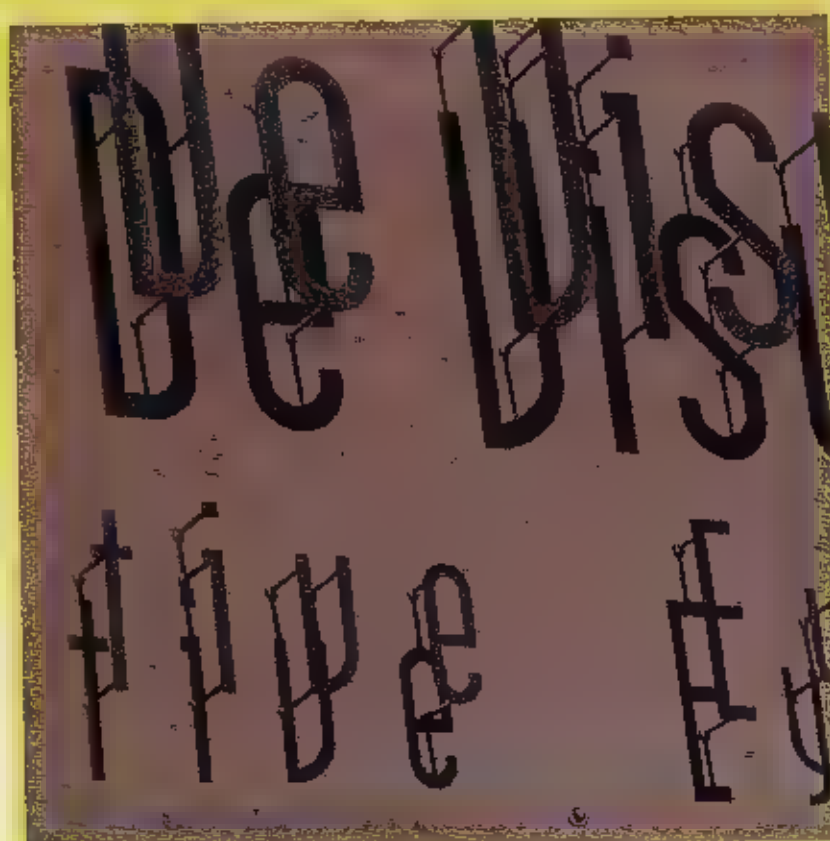
a designer who called herself a designist I seized the opportunity to ask what that is exactly. This question killed the conversation. She mumbled a few unintelligible sentences. "Huh?" I asked, but she had already excused herself on the premise that she needed another beer. Now, sitting amidst the ruins, my chance for understanding has eluded me once again.

I begin to scrape together the debris, salvaging what I can. Pebbles dig into a folio-slash-collective magazine by designers and artists from Germany. A full-color, image-only magazine from France pulled through with minor injuries. Strangely, EX:HAUST EMISSIONS looks untouched. Maybe the students who put it together—graphic design majors from the University of Westminster—are on to something with their portfolio-showcase-slash-rant. A few other parts of journals survived. The cover from GRAPHESIS—an odd magazine about writing and design—remains in tact, as do spreads of a journal from India that had reprinted excerpts from Victor Papanek's DESIGN FOR THE REAL WORLD. Talk about your utopians.

A woman nears, picks up and studies the bits and parts, asks what they are. I say they are the work of people who may be more artist than designer, more entrepreneur than artist or maybe just more academic than anything else, I don't know. I do know they're everywhere: designers interested in being content formers; practitioners who probably won't get rich, but who could have customers or a readership in addition to a client base; I say they are dreamers seeking, not Eden, but a walk through a pest-free garden. I say I hope they continue to construct their little nowheres. And I hope that we



Above: Handpainted lettering, inspired by Modula Sans, on an abandoned train depot in Death Valley Junction, California
 Below: Modula Sans, metal and cast shadow, on a storefront sign in Berkeley California



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Type says another

Type is visible language.

Its selection can make the difference between a message that is recognized symbolically (even without being read) and one that lacks distinction.

If you want to look like everyone else, use this week's most popular font, or something overexposed like Helvetica.

No one will notice.

On the other hand, you might take a look at FontBook, the huge, two-volume type catalog available in the USA exclusively from FontShop San Francisco. In it you will find over 10,000 fonts from over 30 foundries, all available from FontShop. The odds are good you will find what you seek with little effort.

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Name	Title					
Company						
Address						
City	State		ZIP			
Phone	Fax					
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How would you describe your industry? (Please choose one only.)	Design Firm	Marketing/PR/Events/Promotions	Ad Agency	Telecommunications	Finance	Education
	Manufacturing	Web/Multimedia Development	Entertainment	Consumer Products	Healthcare	Publishing
	Prepress/Printing	Software/Hardware/Electronics	Other:			
How many people in your company?	1-5	6-25	26-100	101-500	501+	
In which department do you work?	Design/Creative Services		MIS	Legal	Manufacturing	Public Relations Sales
	Marketing/Marcom		Printing	Purchasing	Customer Service	Accounting Training
	Web Development		Other:			
How many designers in your department?	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21+	
Who is your primary design audience?	In house	Clients/Prospects				
How much of your photography comes from:	Selections should total 100%					
Traditional stock agencies?	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%	
Custom commercial photography?	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%	
Royalty-free digital photography on CD-ROM or from the web?	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%	
Other?	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%	
What types of photos do you use the most?	Sports and Games		Business and Industry		Social Issues and Government Abstracts	
	Food and Beverage		Lifestyles and Culture		Medical and Healthcare Agriculture	
	Nature and Landscapes		Religion, Myth and Fantasy		Wildlife and Animals Education	
	Science and Technology		Travel and Transportation		Other:	
Do you have Internet access?	Yes	No				
What is your modem speed?	14.4 kbps	28.8 kbps	56 kbps	TI	ISDN	Other:



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